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Scene on the Yukon

A
TRIP TO ALASKA
AND THE
KLONDIKE
In the Summer of 1905

BY
N. E. KEELER

CINCINNATI
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To My Grand Nephew

MASTER ARTHUR VAUGHAN, Jr.

Chicago

PREFACE.

This little volume was not intended in the beginning. A wish expressed by some friends to hear an account of my pleasures and experiences in Alaska and the Klondike suggested a typewritten letter, which could be passed around.

But the subject grew, and my interest increased, as I retraced my steps, and the story got, unintentionally, beyond the limits of the intended letter.

This will, doubtless, please my enemies and delight the critic, who is fond of applying the wet blanket.

I hope my reader may some day enjoy the same trip, and have for ship friends and companions as interesting, congenial and entertaining characters as it was my privilege to encounter.

THE AUTHOR.

A TRIP TO ALASKA AND THE KLONDIKE

CHAPTER I.

The Land of the Aurora and the Midnight Sun! Thither my thoughts had turned for many months, in which interesting hours by the fireside had been spent with authors whose accounts of the Arctic regions exercised for me a peculiar fascination.

One must make an effort of the imagination to appreciate the size of the District of Alaska. It occupies a territory of over five hundred and ninety thousand square miles. It is fourteen times the size of Ohio, and covers an area more than one-fifth the size of the United States.

In March, 1867, Secretary Seward, during Abraham Lincoln's administration, completed negotiations with Russia for the purchase of this little-known territory, for seven million and two hundred thousand dollars. In October of the same year, the formal transfer was made at Sitka, to General Rosseau, representative of the United States.

In the purchase of Alaska, Secretary Seward has been given credit for great foresight, but candor favors the belief that he knew nothing more about the future value of this great territory than did

Thomas Jefferson regarding the future value of the Louisiana Purchase.

The population of Alaska in 1900 was sixty-three thousand, five hundred ninety-two, about one-half of which number being white and mostly Americans, while the other half consisted of Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts.

I felt the realization of a dream approaching as I sped along in the comfortable Pullman car of the Northern Pacific, with Cincinnati and Chicago far in the rear, and St. Paul fast disappearing from view.

Ahead of us loomed up the grand heights of the Rockies, with their wonderful scenery. Crossing these and gradually dropping down the opposite slope, our first stop was at Spokane, in Washington.

Spokane is a pretty and prosperous city, with a population of seventy-five thousand. The streets are wide and clean, and the business houses are of the most modern brick construction. The city boasts a famous restaurant known as "Davenport's," where one can get a good, satisfying meal at any price ranging from fifteen cents to fifteen dollars.

A new "Athletic Club House," one of the "Finest in the World" style, is also one of the attractions of the city. The agricultural and mining interests surrounding, with splendid railroad facilities, are a guarantee of the city's present success and future prosperity.

After leaving Spokane, we soon arrived at Seattle, the city of our embarkation.

Seattle is the Chicago of the Pacific Coast. It has a fine harbor, and is the terminus of the Great Northern railroad system, which connects with the Orient by its own line of large and magnificent ocean steamers.

It has very large lumber interests, and as a distributing point for Alaska, is in the lead of all other coast cities. With a population of one hundred and fifty thousand, Seattle has today more life and stir than any city west of Chicago. The climate is bracing and tonic in its effect, and those engaged in a money-making business will tell you it is the "Greatest city on earth."

CHAPTER II.

On Friday, June thirtieth, at ten A. M., we were off for Alaska on the ocean steamer "Dolphin," by way of the inland route.

In judging people and places much depends upon environment, the accidents of health, and conditions of the weather. An impudent waiter or an uncongenial neighbor may produce a condition of mind prejudicial to thorough enjoyment. Such little annoyances, however, must be ignored for the full appreciation of the experience of a trip.

Seventy passengers were aboard, comprising a mixed crowd, and nearly all with business interests to attract them North.

A limited number were combining pleasure with business, and one only had the excuse of pleasure for his trip.

The personnel of the passengers was quite different from that of a party of sightseers on one of the excursion boats. The many miners, full of the lingo of their craft, were interesting in the extreme and good authority on all Alaskan subjects. To them I became indebted for much information about, and many characteristic words of the country to which I was going. For instance, I learned that "cheechaca" is Klondike for tenderfoot, and "sour dough" for a seasoned miner.

At the first meal each one selected his own place at table. I chose to sit among the miners. Before the second, however, each passenger was furnished a ticket which designated the number of his state-room, and his permanent seat at the dining table. The steward had apparently arranged the seating in accordance with the apparel of the passengers, and his idea of the fitness of things. By this method I found myself located where my table-cloth neighbors were principally ladies.

Wishing to carry out what the steward seemed to expect of me, and to be polite to the lady on whose left I was sitting, I remarked, "The majority of the passengers seem to be bound for the North in pursuit of gold."

"O, yes," she replied. It's a very convenient thing to have, and we all want what we can get of it," a conventional reply, which killed further conversational effort on my part and caused me to regret that my "boiled shirt" had been the means of depriving me of my seat among those whose blue flannels were less conventional, but whose conversation far more worth while.

At nine o'clock in the evening we landed at Vancouver, and took on seventy head of cattle, billed for Dawson. It was so dark that I saw nothing of the town. We were now in Canadian territory, and the custom regulations forbade anyone landing from one of Uncle Sam's vessels without inspection.

The "Dolphin" served nine o'clock evening lunch in addition to the three regular meals, and besides these, plates of beautifully-assorted fruits would be sent to all staterooms at about eight o'clock every evening. So we were in no danger of retiring hungry.

During the two following days our boat steadily pursued her way northward through the passages of the "Inland Route." Great forest-covered shores rose on either side of us and we began to realize that this passage would give us no experience of the open sea.

The scenery constantly increased in beauty as we proceeded, and, before we realized that the hour was nine, broad daylight being still about us, we landed at Ketchikan, our first stop in Alaska.

Here we saw our first Indian village and fish cannery, which were the principal objects of interest. Adjoining almost every Alaskan town is the Indian settlement, or quarters, and some of us proceeded to the investigation of this one.

The houses were frame, well built and comfortable, but most of the inhabitants were standing idly about, seemingly without aim in life.

While wandering about outside of the village, we came across a skunk cabbage. The odor from a broken fiber of this curious plant reminds us of its namesake, while in a defensive, and, I may say, an offensive mood.

Here we also saw the beautiful salmon berries, growing on high bushes and twice the size of a thimble or raspberry, but of a deep red or yellow color.

They are gathered by the Indians and offered for sale, and with the addition of cream and sugar make a delicious dish.

Other wild berries are found in abundance, the strawberries, raspberries, etc., ripening much later, however, than those at home.

On leaving Ketchikan, we again steamed steadily on for two days, during which I spent every possible moment on deck, almost begrudging the time taken for meals. The grandeur and majesty of the mountain scenery unfolding before us in ever-increasing beauty, mile after mile, as we proceeded, with the lengthening light of the evening hours, made one feel as if the time spent in sleep were wasted. All on board put off the time for retirement till tired eyes asserted their rights in spite of the absence of darkness, and drove us from the deck.

On Monday, July the third, I awoke and found the steamer made fast at Fort Wrangel, where we had arrived some time during the night. These landings were very pleasant when the boat, in receiving and unloading freight, stopped long enough to give the passengers time to go ashore and explore.

The "sights" at Fort Wrangle consisted of a large hotel — closed; a brewery — not operating,

a totem pole at one end of the main street and the postoffice at the other.

Here we saw for the first time a peculiar structure, common to many Alaskan coast towns. The mountains are so near the coast that at high tide the water leaves only a narrow strip of land between the shore line and their foot. Thus, the town site is crowded over the beach. The walks and streets are made of boards laid on piles driven into the sand, and many buildings are put up on the same style of foundation. A town built thus has a rather peculiar appearance, as if the foot of the mountain were trying to push it off into the water.

After leaving Fort Wrangle, the Dolphin continued her way through Wrangle Narrows. As we proceeded, Indian villages were numerous along the shores. Each village, however, consisted merely of a few tents, and was only the temporary home of the Indians during the fishing season.

Foggy weather is the tourist's nightmare when his object is viewing the great face of Nature. We had none of it to speak of, and consequently saw the wonderful scenery without the slightest mist to dim the view.

Great snow-capped mountains lifted their heads into the pale blue sky; numberless waterfalls of endless shapes and sizes tumbled downward over their rocky sides, hurrying onward to the sea; innumerable inlets and deep rocky fjords opened up to view

at every turn, and, most wonderful of all, we caught a view here and there of some great glacier, sleeping in its distant mountain valley, or bathing its feet in the ocean.

Burton Holmes says, "The Yosemite Valley is beautiful; the Yellowstone Park is wonderful; the Canyon of the Colorado is colossal; Alaska is all of them."

This wonderful day seemed in no mind to leave us, and when at last we touched at Douglas City, on Douglas Island, where the famous Treadwell Gold Mine is situated, the daylight was still around us, and on looking at my watch, it surprised me by pointing to half after nine.

Only a short stop was made here, and a two-mile steam across the bay brought us to Juneau, where I had decided to stop over for a day and see how the "Glorious Fourth" was celebrated in Alaska.

CHAPTER III.

After a good night's rest in a comfortable bed at the Occidental Hotel, I was awakened bright and early by the familiar noise of exploding gun powder, dear to all patriotic Americans.

From then on, till late at night, the deafening report of the giant fire cracker was incessant. The ardor of the citizens was in no wise dampened by the drizzling rain, which continued to fall all day, and even the voice of the cracker was not softened by the ensuing dampness.

During the morning a miner's drilling contest was held back of the court house, the object being to see which two men could drill the deepest hole in a granite rock within the space of fifteen minutes. It was a fine exhibition of muscle. One man would swing the hammer while the other held and guided the long steel drill. When he of the hammer found his strength declining, places were changed swiftly by the two men and the work proceeded without the loss of time. The contest was "on the square," and the event of the day.

The audience consisted of the miners of the town and vicinity, and their friends, with a sprinkling of gamblers.

The people stood unprotected and seemingly unconscious of the rain for two hours, awaiting the finish, while I found myself chilled to the bone, with the protection of my rain coat, rubbers and umbrella. The crowd was a jolly one, and words of cheer were shouted at the brawny participants, such as, "Hit it hard, Denny!" "Only five minutes left, John!" "Bessie is watching you, Larry!" and "Take the money home to her."

Thirty-four and a half inches was the depth of the hole that took the first prize of one hundred and fifty dollars, although the championship record is forty inches.

After dinner I took the ferry back to Douglas City, where we had touched the previous evening, in order to pay a visit to the famous Treadwell Gold Mine. This is a quartz mine, and bears a low grade ore, assaying about two dollars and forty cents a ton. Tradition says that it originally sold for a suit of clothes, was then bought for eight hundred dollars, and the present owners — a close stock company — gave two million, five hundred thousand for it.

Its entire product up to date has been ninety million dollars, and it is still producing one million eight hundred thousand per annum, one million of which is profit. The nine hundred stamps in the mill work day and night, unceasingly, and their noise resembles the roar of Niagara.

Most of the men employed are foreigners, and after hearing various estimates made by different authorities, it is safe to say that on an average, one life a week is lost through various accidents in this mine.

I walked around looking at things about me, but the steady rain made my visit most uncomfortable. I could not but be impressed by the sight of the "Gloria Hole," as it is called, which is the great excavation three hundred feet deep, and twice as broad, made in taking out the ore during the first years of the working of the mine.

Now there are innumerable tunnels, lighted with electricity, running from its floor, horizontally into the depths of the earth, following the rich veins of ore. The truck cars loaded with ore so continuously appear from these openings that one wonders if there is any limit to the supply.

It had been a day of steady rain, and the chilliness of the morning hours had been increased by the experience of the afternoon. On my return to the hotel it was a most delightful surprise to find the steam heat on, and the odor of supper in the air. During the meal I made the acquaintance of the "oolican," called also the candle fish, because of the oil it contains. When dried it burns with a light equal to several candles. Seeing them on the menu, I ordered some and found them so small that I was

served with about a dozen as a portion. They were good, but quite rich.

In spite of the dismal weather, Juneau impressed me as a very interesting and attractive place. Like Fort Wrangle, it is partly built over the beach on piles, the streets and sidewalks being made of wooden planks. Nestling, as it does, at the foot of snow-capped mountains, which rise precipitously at its back, the town has a very picturesque situation. It is the largest and busiest port of southeastern Alaska, and has a population of about three thousand.

The story is told of the original owner of the placer mine, on the sight of which Juneau now stands, that he sold his claim for thirty-five thousand dollars. Afterward he was seen crying because he said he was afraid he would not live long enough to spend all that money. He did live to spend it all and to again become a day laborer.

Outsiders say that it rains all summer and snows all winter in Juneau. When the inhabitants hear this they appear greatly insulted, resent the charge as a fabrication and claim that the climate of their city is as good as that of other places. But the story goes that they recently asked for a reduction in their insurance rates, claiming that, as they had rain or snow continuously, the buildings were always damp, and that this in itself was good fire protection. The insurance men, probably laughing

in their sleeves and thinking to themselves, "What will not men do for money?" recognized their confession of continual wet weather as a just claim, and readily granted a reduction of rates from ten to eight per cent.

At Juneau is the only insurance agency in Alaska.

Only a few doors from the Occidental was a hurdy-gurdy dance house, and I peeped in during the evening to see what "was doing." I found it similar to all such places of amusement which I had seen in the mining camps and cowboy towns in the West of a few years back.

It is a simple but effective institution for separating the miner who is flush, from his money, and the methods of procedure in all cases are practically the same.

Whenever the orchestra, or piano player, as the case may be, "gets busy," the dance is announced and partners chosen. At the end of the dance each couple promenades to the bar and the "gent" pays for liquid refreshment for himself and "lady."

This costs him from twenty-five cents to a dollar, according to the prosperity of the times, and as this occurs after each dance, and the dancing is continued "all through the night," anyone can see how this separating process is accomplished. As his pockets become empty the man becomes full, but not dangerous, as was the cowboy, when he was having his day in the "wild and woolly West," making the

dance houses he frequented very perilous places to visit. The miner is less picturesque. The sombrero, bandanna neck kerchief, high-heeled boots with spurs attached, pistol at waist and "chip on shoulder" are wanting; but he can "soak in" just as much whisky, and enjoys it all the more because he is sure of finding himself with a whole skin when he awakens after sleeping off the effects.

It is the rule for the "lady" to receive half of the intake at the bar for which she is responsible. She usually, unless compelled to do so, avoids taking intoxicating drinks herself, so the drunkenness is almost entirely confined to the men.

Gambling rooms are usually attached to the dance houses, and here the same process of "separation" is carried on, but much more rapidly.

The stop-over at Juneau necessitated a wait of several days, for the next regular steamer. But I found that a smaller boat was leaving that night for Sitka, by way of Skagway.

A visit to Sitka was not in my plan when leaving home, but when the opportunity to take this side trip without loss of time presented itself, I gladly availed myself of it.

Accordingly, I found myself at ten o'clock on board the "Georgia," minus sleeping quarters, which were not to be had, and in the company of a crowd of excursionists returning to Skagway after the Fourth. We prepared to spend the night in the

ladies' cabin. Mandolin music, furnished by two colored gentlemen, entertained us till long past midnight, when we all stretched out as best we could, to get a little sleep.

I was on deck by half-past five the next morning and found that we were just entering the Lynn Canal, which is at the end of the Inland Route. I passed an inspiring day in this long fjord, which is a natural canal leading to Skagway. The wonderful mountains came close on either hand, and were reflected in the deep, clear water at their feet. I did not regret that the five hours spent in ascending the canal were, after touching at Skagway, only long enough to let off passengers, to be repeated in the afternoon in retracing our steps. It was six o'clock when we again reached the entrance and turned westward toward Sitka.

On our way we stopped at many small places, one of which, Kilisnoo, has a large herring-oil factory, doing, I was told, a profitable business. I should have enjoyed seeing the process, but was told that the proprietors discouraged visitors, so thought it best to remain on the outside.

On the following morning we passed through Peril Narrows, at the entrance to which Uncle Sam has placed a lighthouse, and later entered White Stone Narrows, where no beacon seems to be necessary. Their rocky shores as we went through seemed almost within a stone's throw of our boat.

I have read of Norway's coast, and dreamed of one day seeing it. But, surely, nothing on earth could excel the grandeur we had about us at every turn of this "American Norway." Norway's mountains could surely not exceed these in beauty and majesty; here were the same waterfalls and cascades which there abound; the same deep, clear fjords between shores rising to the sky; the same dark pines and firs contrasting with the dazzling snow-covered summits.

What scenery could be more impressive and wonderful than this of my own land?

At last toward evening we looked out upon the open sea, where there was nothing but the great Pacific between us and China, and at about seven we landed at Sitka, the old capital of Russian America.

CHAPTER IV.

I found Sitka the most interesting place in Alaska. It does not attract the gold hunter, as "rich strikes" have not been made in its vicinity, but to the tourist the historic interest adds much to the charm of its beautiful situation. It is nestled at the foot of great snow-draped mountains, which surround it on three sides; before it stretches the bay dotted with sixty islands, making a setting of great beauty, and adding to the attractiveness of the place.

On the slopes of the mountains are evidences of recent glacial action. The moving glacier, I was told, cuts down large trees as though they were straws, leaving a track as clean as a closely-cropped pasture.

The Russian Governor formerly had his residence here, and it is said lived in splendor in his mansion of logs on Capitol Hill, a picturesque knob or mound rising from the water's edge to a height of less than a hundred feet. From their windows, the old Governors must have enjoyed some gorgeous sunsets, ere their country parted with the historic building, about which tradition has woven many an interesting romance. The structure has, unfortunately, been destroyed by fire, after having been gradually denuded of the rich interior furnishings

INDIAN AVENUE, SITKA

left by the retiring Russians. The building was never occupied by the representatives of the United States.

The present Governor, Mr. John G. Brady, is content to live with his fellows in the town in true democratic fashion. Here he has his official residence belonging to the Government, but proudly shows to visitors his vegetable garden in the rear of his private residence on the edge of the town, where he has carefully cultivated such crops as may be seen in the States. These he exhibits as a sample of what can be done in Alaska. But the climate of Sitka is quite mild, owing to the influence of the Japanese Current, and not at all typical of Alaska proper, and it is doubtful if such results could be obtained further inland. Last winter there was not enough cold weather for an ice crop, and during the summer an ice famine was the result. Think of it, with the thermometer on July sixth at fifty-two in the shade!

Keeping warm, even during these mild winters is expensive, as soft coal is worth fifteen dollars a ton, and wood over seven dollars a cord.

The Government maintains an agricultural department in Alaska, at the head of which is Professor C. C. Georgeson, a Dane by birth, and a man of wide experience. His headquarters are in Sitka, and he lives in a beautiful house which occupies the site of the old Governor's mansion on Capitol Hill.

The appropriation for this department is only fifteen thousand dollars annually, and out of this the Professor has to pay traveling expenses and clerk hire.

He makes periodical visits to parts of the district where gardens are possible, or are already started, and encourages agriculture by giving advice and furnishing seed for experiments.

I called on the Governor and found him a very agreeable gentleman. He was formerly a Presbyterian missionary to the Indians, and is very popular with them. Being a man of high honor and honesty, and not a politician, he has not fallen in with all the "schemes" for the "improvement" of his territory, and possibly this fact accounts for his unpopularity with many of the white people.

While in the company of the Governor, I was fortunate in meeting Professor Georgeson, whose wide scientific knowledge and practical experience made him a most delightful and interesting companion later on.

The United States also maintains at Sitka a military post of seventy men, and it was here, so the story goes, that Rear-Admiral Schley, then a confirmed old bachelor, became a benedict, falling victim to the charms of the minister's daughter during the long winter of enforced idleness.

By far the most interesting structure in the town

is the old Greek Church, built in 1814 by the Russians.

As it was but a step from the hotel, I visited it the morning after my arrival. On paying a fee of fifty cents I was allowed to enter and found the nine o'clock service in progress. The gorgeousness of the interior would be hard to describe. I was not prepared for such beauty and richness in this far-off corner of the earth. The statues, without which no Roman church is complete, were nowhere to be seen, but the mural decorations representing Bible scenes and characters, were oil paintings of great value, and done by an artist of no mean ability. The images of saints on the walls were in relief and richly inlaid with gold, silver and jewels.

Much of the service consisted of music. The choir was composed of Indian boys, and their chanting and singing in a minor key, and without accompaniment was charming. A severe thunder storm continued during the entire service, but seemed to blend with the music and add to its impressiveness.

About ten Indians, male and female, formed the congregation, kneeling on the bare floor, for seats were lacking.

On entering, each one knelt, bent over and kissed the floor, or the air, a hair's bredth from it. This act of devotion was repeated at intervals, and, although the services were in a foreign tongue, the

Indians seemed to know the proper moments for each performance of this ceremony.

One fat old squaw accomplished her devotions with difficulty, for the stiffness of old age and rheumatism was in her bones. I pitied her slow and painful efforts at bending and rising, and thought her way to heaven indeed hard.

The services lasted for an hour and a half, and I should have been thoroughly fatigued if I had not spied a bench in a corner, the only seat in the building, and thankfully took possession of it.

After service, I asked the Indian official who had taken my entrance fee, if I could look around. He said, "You want see?" "Yes," I replied.

"Come on," said he, and conducted me to a seat. After some delay the priest approached and took me into a side room, a sort of *sanctum sanctorum,* where some especially valuable possessions of the church were kept. One was an image of the "Madonna and Child," in bas relief, of pure gold, for which an offer of twenty-five thousand dollars had been refused.

He also removed the cover from a glass globe which protected from moth and dust a cap ornamented richly with many costly jewels.

In contrast to this is the Presbyterian church, plain, unassuming and without interior decoration. It is neat as a bandbox, and not much larger.

One of the most beautiful spots about Sitka is a piece of woodland called the Natural Park. Taking my rain coat and umbrella, I proceeded in its direction. En route I enjoyed a visit to the Presbyterian Mission School, to which is attached a most interesting museum of Indian relics.

On leaving the Mission the way led through a most romantic walk along the ocean, overarched with dark cedars, through which glimpses of the water were had at intervals. This is called "Lover's Lane," and led directly to the most beautiful little park, formed entirely by the hand of Nature. At the end of the path the mouth of Indian River, where it flows into the ocean, is reached, and here were standing five totem poles, so new-looking and clean that it made one suspect they had been placed there yesterday.

Totem poles are the most curious productions of Indian workmanship. There is a difference of opinion as to their meaning, but after hearing several versions, I concluded they were a sort of Indian coat-of-arms. Every figure, however grotesque, has a meaning to the initiated, although to an outsider they appear supremely ridiculous.

Sitka has the usual Indian Village, the people earning a living by selling curios, peddling salmon berries and fishing. From what I saw of the Indian here and in other parts of Alaska, he is peaceable and harmless, but without ambition or enterprise

beyond that necessary to procure the bare necessities of life.

He seems to have nothing warlike in his nature, and some man with a head for mathematics has calculated that he can live luxuriously on twenty-five dollars a year. Many are deformed and stunted, the result, it is said, of the inheritance of disease from the white man generations ago.

That something can be made of the Indian, even in his worst phase, has been proved by the successful experiment made at Metlakahtla by Father Duncan.

One cannot make a visit to southeastern Alaska without hearing of this wonderful man and his work. He was in his youth an Episcopal minister in Scotland. He came to Canada as a missionary years ago, and is now an old man, having accomplished what he set out to do — the civilization of one of the most brutal of the Indian tribes of southeastern Alaska.

He began by learning their language, that he might instruct them in the various trades that would make them self-supporting, as well as in the religion of Christ, which has changed them from a state of semi-cannibalism to that of useful God-fearing men. Then interference came in the form of a High Church bishop, and after seventeen years of toil he and his Indians found that the Canadian Government would give them no title to the land on which their village stood; so, accepting an offer

of Annette Island from the United States, they took only their personal possessions, left the church and homes which they had built for themselves and sadly moved to begin life anew in the wilderness. The new Metlakahtla is now thirteen years old, and the experiment a success; Father Duncan is the most-talked-of man in Alaska, and well he deserves the praise he receives, for he has shown the way. May our people follow him with some means of help for these neglected and much-abused people!

Visitors to Sitka are usually much interested in the naval coaling station and store-house maintained by the Government. We read much about the great importance of such stations, but seldom have the chance of seeing a great steamer lay in the immense supply necessary to feed her engines on a long voyage.

Although the Governor and some of the United States officials still retain their residences at Sitka, it is now not the legal capital. On account of its more-central position, Juneau has recently been made the seat of government.

The street-cleaning department is simple but effective. No "white wings" pushed along their dust cans on wheels, looking intently about for stray bits of litter, but in their stead were black wings in plenty, belonging to the numerous crows of the vicinity, who did their work quite as

thoroughly as do the buzzards of Charleston, or the dogs of Constantinople.

The two days spent at Sitka were, in spite of the fact that it rained almost continuously, quite time enough to enable me to see all of interest there. It is a "dead" place, and I did not wonder that Lieutenant Schwatka, of Arctic exploration fame, while tarrying in the town was driven to drink. There was nothing else for him to do, and I was told that he became a record-breaker for consuming whisky. He disdained the meager capacity of the ordinary whisky glass, and drank it from a goblet. Poor fellow, he became an alcoholic slave and afterwards died in Portland from its effects.

At seven the next morning I found myself again steaming northward, saying, as this interesting old Russian town faded in the distance, "Farewell, Sitka, beautiful, historic, quiet and somnambulistic! Would that I were permitted to stay longer and try the rest cure which your atmosphere suggests, but time and the anticipation of what lies before me forbids."

At five that afternoon we landed at the Barron Fish Cannery, one of the newest, most-modern and complete of all the thirty-five to fifty canneries said to be doing business in Alaska.

It had been open but nine days and had already paid all of the expenses for the season.

We went on shore and were allowed to enter the

cannery and were much interested in watching the process. At one end of a continuous operating table, the salmon were cleaned. Then the beautiful red meat was cut into chunks and thrown into a receiver, which started it on an automatic journey of perhaps one hundred and fifty feet. At the end of the trip it landed inclosed in perfectly soldered cans and ready for the boiling process, in water heated to over two hundred degrees.

After being boiled thoroughly and having the labels pasted on the cans, this delicious sea food was ready for the market.

The waters in this immediate vicinity literally swarm with fish during the spawning season, but this may not always be so. Captain Barrow, the owner of the cannery, told me that the habits of the salmon are not yet perfectly known, notwithstanding Professor Blank says they are.

The cannery at Petersburg, nearly two hundred miles east of here, has been closed for two years, owing to the salmon having, without apparent cause, deserted the waters in that vicinity. Salmon roe has no market as yet, but it is predicted by men in the canning business that the day will come when there will be the same demand for it as for shad roe. The egg is as large as a pea, and requires separate mastication in eating.

These canneries in Alaska run high into the millions of dollars in their productive value and pay

better than many mining propositions. The insurance rate on the Barron plant is three per cent on the building and two and a half on the stock.

The Cottage City had an excursion party on board, composed largely of church people. They made the air melodious with Sunday school songs, each with the proverbial eighteen verses, which they continued to the bitter end.

After the six-o'clock dinner an amusing incident occurred.

One of the ladies came to the Captain in high dudgeon, complaining that a waiter had insulted her. At dinner she had asked for fish first and he brought her soup. The fish when it did arrive was not prepared to her taste. Then he said he was not the cook. She was encouraged in her "kick" by a following of friends, saying, "That's so, Captain." The Captain, being in an "agreeable" mood, wanted his passengers satisfied, so he called the waiter and said in a loud voice and in the presence of everyone, "You're drunk. You insulted this lady. Take your apron off and go down stairs!"

The man attempted an explanation, but none was allowed, the Captain in his double bass voice sternly commanding, "Go at once, or I'll have the gang take you down, and put you in irons, where you will be perfectly safe."

The waiter was reprimanded and the ladies were

jubilant over their success in being vindicated in their complaint.

But the joke was, that it was the Captain himself who was drunk, and the ladies did not know it. Then it was whispered that the lady in question had done no "tipping" and this in itself was enough to put any waiter in a bad humor.

During the evening it was announced that on the following morning we were to reach Taku Bay. When, bright and early, we were aroused by the loud clanging of the dinner bell, we knew that the call meant up, dress and on deck as speedily as possible.

When I reached the deck we had already entered the bay, and were gliding slowly along through the clear water. The Taku Glacier was a sight and experience never to be forgotten. There it lay, right before us, winding down between the steep sides of the mountain valley, its source invisible, and its foot reaching into the water.

It is a live glacier, and throws off at intervals immense masses of ice from its lower end. These float off and fill the quiet bay, moving slowly about like fairy queens, majestic, exquisite, of all tints and shades of blue, from deep indigo to pure white, and of all sizes and shapes, stately and magnificent, fantastic and grotesque.

It was a sight whose novelty and charm are difficult to describe, but which will linger in my memory

with the wonders of the Yellowstone and the sublimity of the Grand Canyon. The slow majestic movements of the bergs is due to the fact that seven-eighths of their mass is under water.

When an iceberg breaks off from the parent glacier, there is a loud, ominous crack, and the mass comes sliding through the water with an irresistible force, bringing certain destruction to anything in its path.

For this reason a near approach to the glacier is dangerous, and the steamship companies have very strict rules forbidding their vessels to do so. One captain, I was told, had recently been dismissed for disobeying this order.

I had hoped, when I visited Alaska, to see the famous Muir Glacier in Glacier Bay, but this sight is now hidden from the tourist. An earthquake some time ago so shattered the great glacier that the bay is completely filled with icebergs, and entrance impossible. It will probably never again be one of the sights of an Alaskan trip.

Near the Taku is another glacier, the Livingston. This is a dead glacier, and in contrast to the other is a sorry sight to behold. It is gradually receding from the water's edge, and is of a dirty color, owing to the coverings of dust blown over it by the wind.

At last, after we had feasted our eyes for some time on the magnificent sights about us, our vessel turned and we sailed noiselessly away from our

Crevasse in Muir Glacier, Alaska

early flirtation with these Arctic goddesses, taking with us an impression that can never be effaced.

We had been awakened from our slumbers at three o'clock to see this magic sight, and, as we moved away, the majority of the passengers not accustomed to such early hours, yawned and returned to their beds. Others found that the clear daylight had driven sleep from their eyes, and yielding to the fascination of the scene and hour, remained on deck, using the long interim before breakfast time in viewing the scenery, which still continued in beauty and grandeur.

During the day we made a short stop at Haine's Mission, adjoining which is Fort William H. Seward. This is a very pretty spot, cleared by the Government at a cost of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The soldiers at the fort are from the army posts of Columbus, Ohio, and Fort Thomas, in Kentucky, opposite Cincinnati.

This was our last stop before reaching the Lynn Canal, through which we pursued our way again to its terminus, where we had Dyea on the left and Skagway on the right, with four miles of sailing between them.

CHAPTER V.

Dyea is the foot of, and the entrance to, the Chilkoot Pass, and Skagway stands in the same relation to White Pass. These two entrances to the Klondike were where much interest centered in the great rush to the gold fields in 1898.

While the interest was intense at these two places, it was terrific at certain spots on the road between them and Dawson, the objective point of the gold hunters.

In this mad rush, there was a side of human nature shown which, for selfishness and lust for gold, can hardly be imagined.

It has been estimated that eighty thousand people left their homes, in all parts of the world, for the Klondike, and only thirty-five thousand ever reached the goal.

Many became discouraged, faint hearted, foot sore and weary and turned back, while some remained as part of Mother Earth.

A miner's outfit, as described to me by a "sour dough," is as follows: First in importance, his pick, shovel and pan; then a water-proof match box, one hand ax worn in his belt, a strong knife, memorandum book, lead pencil and compass; for "grub," beans, bacon, flour and salt, with a frying

pan for cooking; a hunter's bag, made of wolf skin to sleep in, and a good blanket. The weight of this combination is from fifty to sixty pounds, and sometimes a mule is used to carry the pack.

This man said, "You don't need medicine in this climate; grub is the principal thing." However, I would not follow a miner's advice on that subject, as he is usually strong, healthy and has a good digestion.

He has two sets of teeth, one in his mouth, another in his stomach, and he does not need medicine. All persons, however, are not thus well equipped.

The above-mentioned "sour dough" also gave me the following piece of advice with regard to secrecy when gold is discovered:

"In the event of your making a find, don't tell anyone, not even your partner, for there is no secret when two know it."

It is related of the Mackey, Flood, O'Brien and Fair crowd, of California, that when they discovered the lode that led to the great Comstock Mine, they covered it up entirely from view, went to San Francisco, made conditional contracts with bankers and through this secrecy alone were able to control the management of that wonderful mine which made them all multi-millionaires.

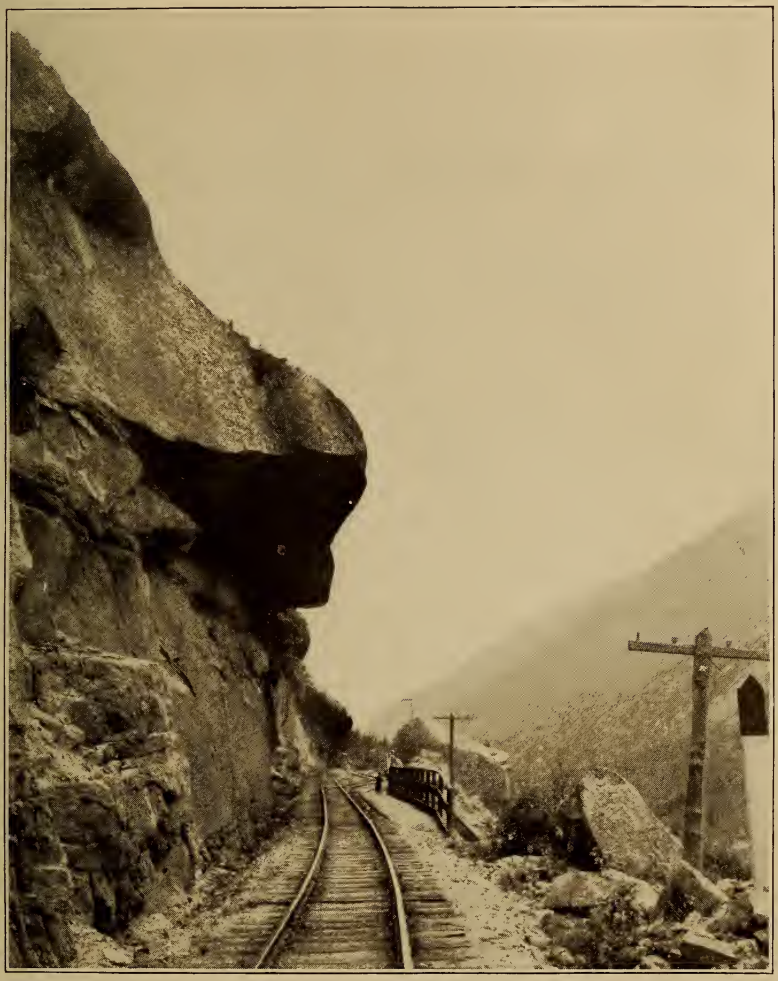
Mrs. Taylor, the proprietress of the Fifth Ave-

nue Hotel in Skagway, related to me some heart-rending scenes of which she was a witness in the "rush of '98." She was living at Dyea at that time and saw hundreds turning homeward, broken in spirit and hope-forsaken. She heard horses cry like suffering humans, and saw them drop dead from hunger and exhaustion.

When traveling on the two passes mentioned, horses have been known to push on under whip and lash, until nature failed, and then fall in their tracks never to rise again. They were heard to groan piteously in their hunger and weakness and show almost human emotions. In "Dead Horse Gulch," on the White Pass, there were at one time thirty-five hundred carcasses.

Since the White Pass and Yukon Road has been built over the White Pass, Chilkoot Pass has relapsed into history, as has Dyea. The buildings at Dyea were sold at auction, the brewery bringing only five dollars. All buildings were removed for the lumber they contained, and nothing now remains of that once-busy town but a vegetable garden. A man has shown considerable enterprise in plowing up the streets, and is trying the experiment of raising garden truck to supply the market of Skagway.

It was once a local axiom, "All who enter Chilkoot Pass leave truth behind." But the fact that the pass has been abandoned, as a route of travel,



HANGING ROCKS NEAR CLIFTON, ON THE WHITE PASS AND YUKON R. R.

does not insure the traveler finding no liars in Alaska.

The United States cruisers, "Chicago" and "Marblehead," and the torpedo-boat destroyer, "The Perry," were anchored just off the coast at Skagway, and the Skagway daily newspaper announced a game of baseball to begin at *seven* that evening between the sailor boys of the "Chicago" and the "Townies."

Skagway is in a basin of snow-capped mountains, and at the foot of Skagway Valley, or Canyon. The meteorological conditions are such that the wind blows continually. The air, therefore, is always fresh and invigorating.

Ten miles north and ten miles south, the snow falls very deep in the winter, but the steady wind prevents much of it settling in the town.

There are one thousand people in the place today; three years ago there were ten thousand, and during the rush of '97 and '98, some say there were twenty thousand scattered around in tents and shacks, on the hill and mountain sides.

There were among them all kinds of persons, many of whom were "non-producers," living on their wits and other people's money. It was here that "Soapy Smith," died "suddenly." He was a gambler and a blackleg, with a tough "constituency" back of him.

He robbed people systematically and every other way. There are in Skagway today people who remember him, and can relate his tragic death at the hands of a physician, after the physician himself had received a fatal shot from "Soapy's" pistol.

I retired to my room at eleven o'clock, but this daylight habit of nature had begun to fasten its charms upon me, and I gazed long from my window as in a trance, into the soft stillness of midnight, before I lay down not so much for sleep as for rest and to hurry the approaching morrow.

I know that poor beds are sometimes conducive to early rising, but that was not the case at the "Fifth Avenue," where everything was first-class at one dollar fifty per day, with fifty cents extra for very satisfactory meals.

The next morning while waiting for the free bus to convey us to the station where we were to take the train to White Horse, the clerk of the hotel entertained us by telling an incident which happened in the "gold rush" time in Skagway.

A speculator has imported five hundred chickens and penned them in a tent ready to be sold at five dollars apiece, the retail price of a chicken in '98. In the night they were visited by dogs of the Alaskan breed, crafty, sly and hungry. In the morning not a feather of the five hundred was to be found. The dogs were "in" a good meal, and the speculator "out" about twenty-five hundred dollars.

Skagway Entrance to the Klondike

CHAPTER VI.

The trip from Skagway was made on the famous White Pass and Yukon narrow-gauge railroad, a distance of one hundred and eleven miles to White Horse. It is the "best-paying road in America," having paid for itself before it was finished. At White Horse, boat travel is resumed, so that this was the only railroad travel I experienced after leaving Seattle, till my return.

There were only five passengers, and we soon became one select party; Mrs. H. and her little daughter, Dolly, going to join her missionary husband at Circle; Miss. L., who is identified with the hospital work of the Episcopalian Mission at Fairbanks; Major F., inspector of the Government posts; Professor Georgeson, representing the Government agricultural department of Alaska, whom I had met in Sitka, and myself.

It required two engines to take us to Summit, the highest point of the pass, but from there on was down grade. Just before reaching Summit, we passed a spot where fifty-five men were killed in a snow-slide in the rush of '98.

In the rush to this mecca of gold hunters, two men would start out as partners, and not infrequently fall out and divide their partnership posses-

sions. The boat, so necessary on the lakes and rivers, would be cut in two, the sheet-iron stove divided into halves, the blanket ripped in the middle, and all other of their joint possessions divided with exact equality, but with utter disregard for their future usefulness. Each man was bent on not allowing the other any advantage.

When we reached Summit and stopped at the station, the sight of the British flag and our own Stars and Stripes, floating side by side, reminded us that we were about to leave the protection of our fatherland and enter upon Canadian soil. This was further emphasized by the entrance of a dirty-looking fellow with an ill-smelling pipe in his mouth which he continued to puff, regardless of the presence of the ladies. This person, we discovered, was the inspector, and we soon found our luggage, as well as ourselves, undergoing a thorough examination. The custom officer and his pipe gave us their company as far as Bennett, and I assure you did not add any to the pleasure of the trip.

Summit being the highest point, as well as the dividing line, we began to descend on leaving it, having parted with the extra engine used in the ascent.

We had a good dinner at Bennett for a dollar, after which we passed Lakes Linden and Bennett, where the water route to the Klondike formerly began, and whose banks in the rush of '98

presented a busy scene of boat building by those who had succeeded in crossing the pass and were preparing to go on.

Just before reaching White Horse we saw Miles Canyon and White Horse Rapids, so destructive to the lives and property of those same boat builders, who tempted fortune on these waters.

After an eight-hour ride from Skagway, we arrived at White Horse, where we put up at the New Windsor Hotel. It was a "makeshift" stopping place, a late conflagration having destroyed the best hotel. We were glad to get under a roof even at two dollars per day for room, and fifty cents extra for each meal.

With Major Febinger, I called on Major Snyder at his headquarters. The Major is in command of the Canadian Military Post. While there we were introduced to Mr. Jack Dalton. His name was familiar, and we learned later that he was a "squaw man," and a pioneer of the country. He once had a contract with the United States Government to furnish beef to the military posts at seventy-five cents per pound, which item he related to us himself. The famous "Dalton Trail" was named in his honor, and rumor has it that he was responsible for several "good Indians."

There is a flourishing vegetable garden at this post, which the Major is fond of showing to his callers.

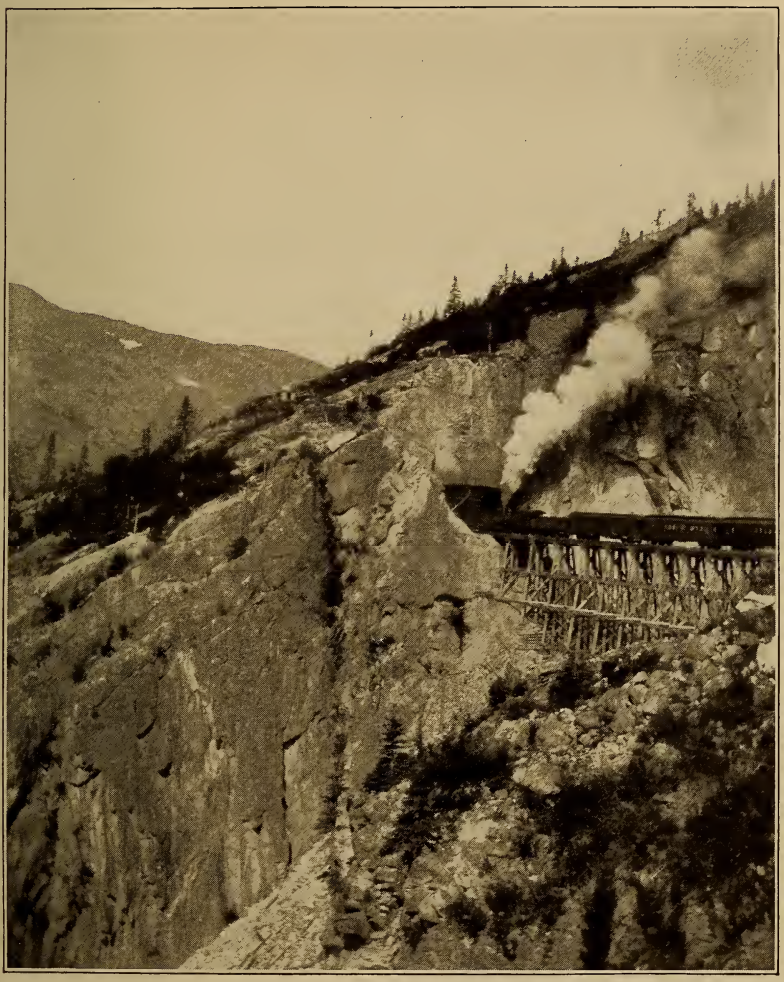
The United States Government has six military posts and about one thousand soldiers in Alaska. I fail to see any present use for them, unless they should be put on police duty and perform the same service for Alaska that the mounted police do in the Yukon territory of Canada.

We returned to the hotel, where, in spite of the mosquitos, we sat in the midst of the chronic daylight, till, looking at our watches, we saw it was midnight, then retired.

My room was just barely large enough for me to enter and pivot around in, without endangering the wall paper, but it was neat, with clean bed linen — two features more important than size — and I was soon asleep in spite of the undiminished light from without.

On Tuesday, July thirteenth, just before noon we boarded the flat-bottomed, stern-wheeled steamer "White Horse," bound for Dawson. She drew only four feet of water, but was first-class in all respects. Our party of five, which had had a monopoly of the railroad coach, was now increased to twelve, and each passenger enjoyed a stateroom to himself.

At White Horse the river is called Fifty-Mile River. It spreads to a width of one hundred and fifty feet between shores. It is very deep and has a fierce current.



Approach of Tunnel near White Pass Summit

At Hootalinqua the river's name is changed to Lewes, and at the mouth of the Pelly, the name Yukon begins.

White Horse is at the head of navigation.

Major Febinger had made the trip before, and, in order that we might be prepared, gave us a few samples of the kind of stories we might expect to hear.

First, he told us about the Klondike eggs, classified as "strictly-fresh" eggs, "fresh" eggs and "eggs."

When a customer in a restaurant asked the waiter if the eggs were good, he said, "Pretty good, but they look better scrambled."

Eggs were so expensive once in Dawson that cafe managers had signs hung up reading, "Customers not in good financial standing will be required to make a deposit before ordering eggs."

Liars are also divided into three classes in the territory: The liar, the d—d liar and the Yukoner, which bit of information of the Major's reminded one of the party that General Blank once remarked that there were only three good liars in Washington; one was Senator Doe and the other two were Tom Ochiltree. But that was years ago, before the Yukon was known.

One day we had a variety of very warm weather, and, as the Major wiped his perspiring brow, he remarked, "This reminds me of Yuma, the

hottest place on earth, sir. Why a Yumaite, when he dies and reaches Hades, has to send back for his overcoat, and the people there feed their hens cracked ice to keep them from laying hard-boiled eggs."

On the river trip to Dawson we passed several soft-coal mines. At one of them we stopped and took on some coal to be used in the galley only. It was in gunny sacks and cost twenty dollars per ton. We made frequent stops for wood, which was used to run the engines. It takes about thirty cords going down, a distance of four hundred and sixty miles, and, because of the swift current, twice as much returning up stream.

Cord wood is worth six dollars a cord, and it is probable that oil will soon be used on these, as on many of the Yukon steamers, as a matter of economy.

We made a short stop at Tantaulus, where I could see nothing but a police station and a coal mine, and shortly after passed through Five-Finger Rapids and Rink Rapids. As the water here is not so rapid nor as shallow as in those above White Horse, there is no especial danger in going through them.

The scenery so far had been grand beyond description. Fascination was in the air. The effect of continual daylight in this clear atmosphere and bracing climate was simply charming. I prome-

naded the deck till midnight, and then turned in reluctantly, scarcely able to tear myself from the wonders around me. Rest must be had to prepare for the morrow, but Nature seemed not to have made any provision for it, today so blending with tomorrow that one never knew when one ended and the other began.

When I awoke the next morning the great heart-beat of the engine had ceased, and I knew we had arrived at Dawson.

CHAPTER VII.

We were at last in the heart of the far-famed Klondike Region. In all directions from this center, gold mines have been discovered. Only fourteen miles from Dawson, at the junction of Bonanza and Eldorado Creeks, is Bonanza, also called Grand Forks. Within a stone's throw of this place is Discovery Mine, on Bonanza Creek, where in 1896, the original great strike was made, which electrified the world. The news of this rich find caused a stampede to this section from all points of the compass. Nothing like this rush had been known since the days of "forty-nine."

The two creeks mentioned are tributaries to the Klondike River, from which stream this region takes its name.

The most reliable story of the finding of gold is the following: "Two Indians, while resting from a tramp, picked up a small gold nugget from the ground. They staked off a claim and took out a fortune, but soon severed themselves from it by the whisky and gambling method. A man named McCormick staked the adjoining claim, and it gave him eight hundred thousand dollars. This great fortune departed by the same road as that of the Indians, and McCormick was soon reduced to the

necessity of earning his daily bread in the vicinity of Fairbanks.

Within a radius of two miles around Bonanza, fifty million dollars have been taken from the ground. Gold Hill alone furnished six of the millions. The mines are all placer mines. As there is no deep delving or crushing necessary, which requires expensive machinery, but only the careful washing of surface dirt, this kind of a mine is called a poor man's mine. The gold is found in gravel beds and is easy of access, but in places requires considerable digging.

In the Yukon territory there are ten claims to the mile. A "creek" claim measures five hundred by six hundred and sixty feet, according to the Canadian law. "Bench" claims and "hill" claims are those located on the mountain sides above the creeks, and are three hundred feet square. On the United States side of the Alaskan boundry, the law fixes the size of a claim at six hundred by thirteen hundred and twenty feet, or about eighteen acres. Uncle Sam is so generous in the size of his claims that on Fairfield and Cleary creeks near Fairbanks there are respectively only fourteen and twenty-five claims.

In the Klondike the Canadian Government formerly exacted a royalty tax of twenty per cent, on all gold taken from the ground. This was reduced to ten per cent and again to only two and a

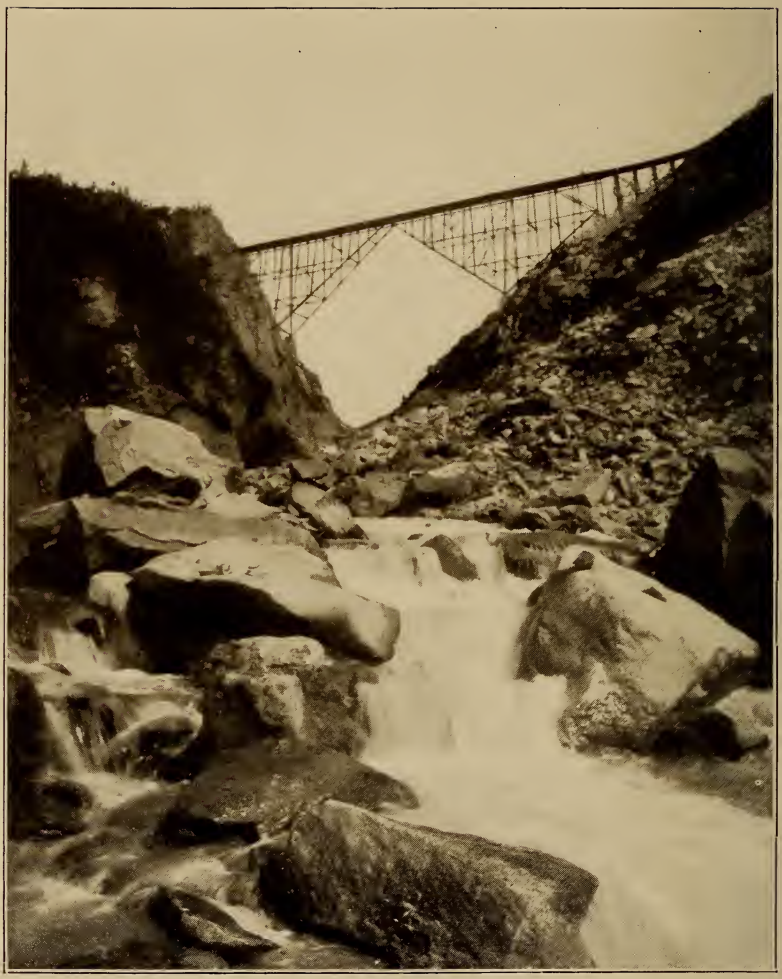
half per cent, which it now remains, adding much to the better contentment of the miners who formerly objected seriously to so high a rate.

From the top of Gold Hill a splendid view can be had up and down both Bonanza and Eldorado creeks. Almost at a glance the eye takes in the fascinating combination of engines and boilers, steam scoops, shovels, baskets on trolley wires, flumes, sluice-boxes and all the paraphernalia for extracting the gold dust from the earth. There is Cheechaca Hill opposite, and French Hill in the distance.

All the ground in sight has produced gold, and a spirit of covetousness stole over me involuntarily, as I gazed at so much wealth almost within my grasp, and for a moment I understood the feelings of the miner and longed to get down and dig; to try my fortune with the pick, shovel and pan.

In the first excitement there was great lack of care, and now the dirt here, including the tailings, is being worked over and good pay is obtained.

Some miners I noticed on Gold Hill were arranging for hydraulic work when a fellow miner strolled by dressed in his Sunday clothes and much the worse for liquor. They asked him why he was not working. His reply was characteristic. Pulling a handful of greenbacks from his pocket he said, "I'm not going to work as long as this lasts."



Scene on the White Pass and Yukon R. R.

The mines are numbered according to their consecutive order, up or down the creek, counting from Discovery Mine, as No. 6 above, or No. 20 below.

No one can remain long at "The Forks" without hearing of Miss Mulrooney, a prominent and interesting character of '98, who seems to have left a lasting impression on all who knew her. She came from Scranton, Pennsylvania, bringing with her a thorough knowledge of cooking and housekeeping. This secured her the position of stewardess on board a steamer from Seattle, by which means she reached Alaska, and finally landed on Eldorado Creek. People there seem never to tire of telling of her wonderful enterprise. She kept a boarding house, worked a mining claim with a force of men under her direction, became rich and finally went the way of all "good Americans" — to Paris, by means of a French count named Cabinair. The gentleman was evidenty in "reduced circumstances" when she met him, as he appeared in Grand Forks as the representative of some French mine owners.

He fell in love with the lady, induced her to marry him, and now she is doubtless disporting herself in gay "Paree," but as to this the legends are silent. One man having seen her since her departure states that when he met her on a San Francisco steamer she was, to use his words, "dressed as fine as any lady," and appeared quite a different

person from the Miss Mulrooney of rubber boots and overalls.

I was very fortunate while at Dawson to receive with some others an invitation to witness a "clean up" at McKay and McGillivary's mine, about ten miles distant. The party drove to the place in buggies and received a warm welcome by both the owners and their wives, who were New York people.

The McKays invited us to their log cabin, the interior of which we found most elegantly and tastefully furnished. Here we were offered refreshment and afterward proceeded to the sluice box. On our arrival the running water was shut off, the gold scooped up from the bottom and put into a large pan. The amount thus obtained they told us was ten thousand dollars, the result of three days' sluicing.

I tried lifting the pan and found it almost beyond my strength. Mixed with the fine grains of gold dust were about a half dozen nuggets somewhat larger than an army bean, and I hoped we might be presented with one as a souvenir of this most interesting visit. But the size of the party, I suppose, precluded this.

General Greely and his party, who were making a tour of Alaska, were also present, and Miss Greely, a girl about eighteen, was given the privilege of trying her hand at panning dirt taken from the mine. It was a hard task, but with much exertion

and some help, she obtained quite a little pile of dust, valued, they said, at about seven dollars. She was presented with this by the owner as a souvenir, and after some hesitation as to accepting it was persuaded to carry it away in her handkerchief.

Fifty-five men were employed in the mine. They worked in two shifts, so the work never ceased day or night. The men received four dollars per day and board. The board cost the owners two dollars a day for each man at a neighboring road-house, which had the contract for their accommodation. The owners expected to exhaust all the "pay dirt" by October, they would then move to and operate a new claim held by them on Tananah River.

The Dawson and White Pass Railroad is now being constructed up Bonanza Creek, and its course is laid out through claims, regardless of the rights of the miners. An injunction has been served against the company, operations have ceased and litigation will probably stop the work for some time to come.

The miners prefer the gold to the doubtful future utility to them of the railroad, for they are here today and gone tomorrow, and by the time the case is settled the land may be exhausted as to its gold, and the road graded without any opposition.

These placer mines can only be worked during the summer season of from four to five months.

Two, and sometimes three, shifts of men are used with continuous work, night and day, made possible by the ever-present daylight, Sundays included. Thus, a mine owner, by "Making hay while the sun shines," can before the freeze comes, get in an amount of work almost equal to that of an ordinary year on the outside, where there are unions and the eight-hour law.

Then comes the long winter's rest of which many take advantage to return to Seattle or some other city in the States, and enjoy "civilized" life for a while. Those who prefer to remain and work through the long dark days of winter, do so by thawing out the dirt with steam pipes and throwing it up on the dump where it will be ready for the sluice box the following summer.

There are many Swedes among the miners, and one often hears of the "lucky Swede," but do not be misled; he is the man who works the hardest and saves his money.

While in Dawson, I met the Rev. Dr. John Prindle, a missionary who was doing good work in Bonanza. He was tall and athletic, about forty-five and, when driven to it, could fight as well as preach. His education, courteous and agreeable manners and earnestness made him as interesting as he was useful, and I enjoyed very much listening to his stories of the pioneer days of his work in that rough

Looking Toward Skagway from Rocky Point

community, where he was peculiarly fitted to do much good.

I enquired of the liveryman from whom we had hired teams to convey us to the "clean up" if it were really true that horses were shot at the end of the summer season to save the expense of keeping them through the winter, and that horses brought from Seattle in the spring could be bought for less than the cost of their feed during the long month of inactivity. He said it was true; that it had frequently been done to his knowledge in both Fairbanks and Dawson, and that he himself had shot two the previous year. It seems a pity to do so, but when the freight on a pound of feed from Seattle is sixteen cents, what is a man to do? It would ruin him to keep them.

Afterward, while returning home over the Canadian Pacific, I met a miner who told me the same story. He and his partner had thirty-five claims in the Klondike, some five years before, when they were so unwise as to undertake to keep eight horses through the winter, because they had not the heart to shoot them. The cost was so great that, to quote his vernacular, "It knocked our bank account silly and we went broke." There was no money left to keep the claims good, nor to work them. In fact, the men were ruined through their tender-heartedness. They sold a claim for two hundred dollars, abandoned the rest in which there were

possible millions and left "for the outside," never to return, having sacrificed all prospects of riches to their kind-heartedness.

This same miner had a happy encounter the next day, which I was pleased to witness. As he sat at breakfast in the dining car, up stepped a gentleman, slapped him on the back and extended his hand with an exclamation of surprised delight. It was the partner of five years before, whom he had not met since.

DAWSON — FIRST AVENUE NORTH FROM QUEEN STREET
MIDNIGHT, JUNE 10, 1904

CHAPTER VIII.

Dawson is the heart of the Klondike, and was the mecca of gold hunters in the rush of ninety-eight.

The first thing that a cheechaca learns is that he may stow away all of his nickles and dimes for future reference, as the quarter is the smallest coin current.

I picked one up on the street the day I arrived, and felt rich till I found I must spend it for a Cincinnati Enquirer sixteen days old. All newspapers are the same price, whether a Dawson daily, just issued, or a Seattle daily, two weeks old. Cigars, beer, wine, whisky, soda water and bromo seltzer are "two bits" per; two bits for a shave and the same to the boot-black for massaging your shoes. And the laundry prices! Thirty to fifty cents a garment for having your linen "mangled." One gentleman paid fifty cents for having a shirt washed which cost him only forty-eight cents when new.

A lady paid thirteen dollars for a small bundle of laundry, but passed it off pleasantly by saying that she knew the dirt was rich around Dawson, but did not know it cost so much to get it out of linen.

I thought it my privilege to kick at my bill, but

the proprietor smoothed down the ruffled feathers by quoting the high price of soap, starch and help.

A telegram of ten words to Cincinnati costs four dollars and a quarter.

You can have a good, regular meal at the best restaurant for six bits — seventy-five cents — but should you feel inclined to partake of eggs you will pay one dollar for three. For a whole spring chicken you will be charged four dollars, and a sirloin steak costs two dollars and fifty cents. Stewed tomatoes or corn are fifty cents per portion, and for a glass of cow's milk you must part with a quarter.

The "tin-can" cow is found in all parts of Alaska, and the Klondike, as condensed milk is more easily shipped and kept than the live article.

The greenhouse gets a dollar for three cucumbers from the cafe manager, but I had no desire to know the consumer's price. I noticed, however, that some people ate them regularly, without regard to price or consequences.

If you are wise and not a spendthrift, you will stick to regular meals. They take you from soup to coffee in first-class style, especially at the "Northern Cafe." These I found most satisfactory and least expensive.

It pays to keep well in Dawson, for physicians charge ten dollars a visit, and if you break a bone and are taken to the hospital you may be thankful

if your clothes are left you in which to depart after recovering.

There is a millionaire preacher living in Dawson — a Doctor Grant — who is a man with ways of his own. A noted lecturer recently appeared in the city and the Doctor at once engaged him to speak in his church. He paid the fee out of his own pocket, and then threw open the church doors to the public free of charge.

I asked if his million came from mining interests but was told that was not the case. He was connected with the hospital in some way, and there must be a large graft somewhere. You will be surprised, perhaps, to hear of "graft" in Canada, thinking that it belongs exclusively to our great republic, but I was told with a smile that Canadians in Dawson are "up to date," and no officer of the Dominion had ever left the place for the poor house.

On July Fourth there was a prize fight between Philadelphia Jack O'Brien and Twin Sullivan. The fight went the limit of twenty rounds, and was declared a draw. It certainly was a draw in more ways than one, for men poured in from the surrounding creeks three days in advance, not wanting to miss any part of it. Seats sold for five dollars and seven dollars and fifty cents each, according to location. There was eight thousand dollars in the house, and when the decision was given, another "go" was arranged for August tenth.

Doctor Grant fought and preached against the coming contest, announcing from his pulpit that it was illegal and would not be permitted. He employed a lawyer to stop it. A citizen voiced the prevailing sentiment when he said, "When about everybody in town wants a thing there is small chance for two men to stop them having it."

As I left before the event I did not hear how it turned out, but a daily paper has since announced that Mr. O'Brien has returned to California after a pleasant summer in Alaska, where he "cleaned up" fifteen thousand dollars.

Mr. William Gates is one of the characters of the Klondike. He is familiarly known as "Swift-Water Bill," a title he earned by refusing to ride through White Horse Rapids on a raft. Bill knew a thing or two about people having lost their hold on life in these rapids, and, not being prepared to quit his earthly career just then, walked miles around to make sure of a whole skin and no broken bones.

The title thus obtained has stuck to him ever since. He has gained additional notoriety by working a corner on eggs. Bill was enamored of one of Dawson's belles. The lady was very fond of eggs, and, he being "flush," saw a chance to outdo his rivals. He bought all the eggs in Dawson, causing the price to jump to one dollar per egg. I have no doubt the lady appreciated such exaggerated devotion.

He is now "on his uppers" in Fairbanks, but since returning home I read in the papers how "Swift-Water Bill" has made a great strike, and is now a millionaire. His wife has put in her appearance and brings suit for divorce and alimony.

"Nigger Jim" is another character much spoken of. He is a *white* man, however, but comes from the South and has a true southern accent, which last has given him the title.

He owned the Auditorium in Dawson once, and was dubbed a millionaire, although he was probably never worth more than twenty-five thousand at any time in his life. He also had a fair-weather wife who left him for a handsomer man when he went broke, and the last that was heard of him was that he was in Fairbanks looking for good luck, having stampeded there with the other "has beens," when gold was discovered in that region.

There are not more than fifteen hundred people in Dawson today, and ninety per cent of them are Americans. People who spend the winters here are said to grow gray very rapidly, owing to the low ceilings of the log cabins, where their heads are in the hottest part of the room.

Some people believe that Dawson is built on a glacier. It is a fact that ice is close to the surface, and when a stove or furnace stands on the lower floor of a building the heat causes a thaw underneath and consequently a sagging of the timbers and

slump in the floor. There is but one brick building in Dawson, and that is a double store owned by Mr. Palmer, a merchant and mine operator.

The following list of house rules were in vogue at the "Sour Dough Hotel," in the early history of Dawson:

HOUSE RULES

Towels changed Weekly.

Dogs not allowed in bunks.

Candles and Hot Water charged extra.

Board $2.00 per square foot. Meals extra.

Spiked Boots must be removed at night.

Guests are requested not to speak to the Dumb Waiter.

Anyone troubled with night-mare will find a halter on the bed-post.

If the room gets too warm, open the window and see the fire-escape.

Base-ballists desiring a little practice will find a pitcher on the stand.

Don't worry about paying your bill; the house is supported by its foundations.

The Hotel is convenient to all cemeteries. Hearses to hire at 25 cents a second.

Guests wishing to do a little driving will find hammer and nails in the closet.

Guests wishing to get up without being called can have self-rising flour for supper.

If the lamp goes out take a feather out of the pillow; that's light enough for any room.

If you are fond of athletics and like good jumping, lift the mattress and see the bed spring.

Not responsible for diamonds, bicycles or other valuables kept under the pillows; they should be deposited in the safe.

The winters in Alaska and the Klondike are long, and, except during two or three hours at noon, artificial light is necessary. The people live by the clock more than by the sun. One hears much about the wonderful fireworks effect of the aurora borealis, which is seen to best advantage in the winter, preventing total darkness, which would result from the absence of the sun.

On July the eighteenth the thermometer at noon registered seventy-two in the shade, a very delightful temperature; but by ten that night it was down to fifty-four, and during my week's stay we had frost on two successive nights.

But occasionally we had the contrast of an extremely hot day. On one of these the thermometer ran up to ninety-two in the shade and one hundred and twenty in the sun, both temperatures always being mentioned in Dawson when quotations of the weather are made.

Even at this extreme temperature the sun's heat never seems oppressive, but is more like that of a moderate fire. One can easily dodge it and cool off by seeking the shade, where it is always comfortable.

On the street one day I encountered a bright Irish woman and her daughter whom I had met on the Georgia. They had been looking for lucrative employment at different places all the way from Seattle, and now a position as cook at one hundred and twenty-five dollars per month for herself and

one as waitress at seventy-five dollars per month for her daughter had been offered by a hotel proprietor in Dawson, so they decided to locate there. But the lady had the gold fever, and a few days later I met them on the Sarah, bound for Fairbanks, the place of the latest discoveries.

Wages in Dawson are very high and servants scarce. An ordinary domestic receives seventy-five dollars a month, while the cook at the "Principal Hotel" received fifty dollars a week, and the waiters at the "Northern Cafe," one hundred and fifty a month. These latter did not expect tips, unless it be something worth while, as a five dollar gold piece.

The miners are very independent about tipping, and they establish a precedent for others to follow.

The vaudeville shows did a prosperous business when Dawson was at its best. The soubrette who sang the most touching and pathetic song, about home and mother, had a perfect shower of nuggets thrown at her at the end of her stunt. After each "artist's" performance the "souper" would sweep the floor and present to her on a dust pan the pile of nuggets which had been thrown at her feet.

One songstress had savings from this source amounting to fifty thousand dollars, so she decided to use it having a good time. She proceeded to San Francisco, chartered a yacht, provisioned it bountifully, invited her friends for a little vacation

trip, and for a while life was a continual round of pleasure.

It was not a long continued round, however, for even fifty thousand has a limited capacity, and she was soon back in Dawson, singing the same old songs in the same old place, to earn her daily bread.

The largest nugget ever found in the Klondike is on exhibition in a jeweler's window in Dawson. It weighs eighty-five and forty-eight hundredths ounces, and is worth, by weight, thirteen hundred dollars. To buy it, however, you would have to pay fifteen hundred. Gold dust is worth from fourteen to fifteen dollars per ounce, and was in the early days used as money. Scales for weighing the dust are still to be seen on the counter of stores and saloons, where purchases are occasionally made with it now. It used to be a common occurrence for a man to invite a crowd to drink, and toss his bag of gold dust to the barkeeper with the remark, "Take out what I owe you, Jim," and there are no records of his being cheated.

Champagne once sold for forty dollars a quart bottle, and one dollar was the ordinary price of drinks or cigars. The first three nights after the "Exchange" was opened the bar receipts were fifty-eight thousand dollars, and it was a common thing for a saloon to take in three thousand dollars over the bar in one night.

Formerly a bunk house was filled night and day at one dollar per bunk. Sheets were not thought of. The landlord just kept his place warm and collected the dollars. Lodgers were always waiting their turn for a sleep, and the place was filled day and night.

Things now have changed, for Dawson is dull, and for the past eighteen months the merchants have been selling out their stocks of goods, that they may depart for new fields where a "rush" may make their business brisk once more.

CHAPTER IX.

"Gold, gold, gold, gold,
Bright and yellow, hard and cold!"

The preponderance of opinion is that it costs an average of ninety per cent to take the gold from the ground. Not more than one prospector in a thousand "goes out" rich.

His money "comes easy and goes easy."

It is the old story of every new mining country — hard work, privations, long years of hardships, then, perhaps, a rich strike and a sudden accumulation of fifty or a hundred thousand dollars. Then comes the reaction; the rough life gives only a taste for rough pleasures, and many times these vast accumulations are spent in the brief space of a week or ten days, on wine, women and gambling, and after this brief period of enjoyment a return to the old life. Still it seems a fascinating life to those who are in it, and begets a fearless independence and recklessness as to the future that astonishes a cool, calculating business man.

After his "pie card" has received its last punch, a miner will take account of "cash on hand," and if it proves to be only six bits will expend the whole of it on a good, square meal, without worrying as to

where the next is to come from. Then out he goes to the diggings.

Comparatively few from the "outside" ever make a strike, or even get enough to cover expenses. In 1898, eighteen men left one town in Texas for the Klondike, and each man had about twenty-five hundred dollars in cash. After a few weary months every one of them returned home "broke." And this is the story repeated over and over again in the Klondike.

It is difficult to estimate accurately Alaska's great output of the precious metal, as millions of dollars in dust are taken from there without any record being made of it.

In order to encourage honesty among their workmen it is now the custom for mine owners to present a reward of one hundred dollars to any man finding a large or valuable nugget.

As far as experience goes it has been found that scientific rules are not especially effective in locating gold, for the "cheechaca" is just as liable to make a strike as the "sour dough."

In discussing the matter with an old inhabitant with a faculty for observing facts, he said, "Only a fool, with the blind luck of a fool, ever made a big strike." There certainly seems to be a good deal of "fool's luck" in the finding of the gold, but it is the wise man who keeps his fortune when it is accumulated. Gambling is the greatest enemy a miner

has, for it is a game in which most men lose and very few ever win. But it is a deeply-rooted propensity of human nature, which may be seen in all walks of life from the crap shooting of the negro to the raffle of the church fairs, and the popular pastime of our society women, "bridge whist," or the speculations of our business men in the stock exchange. It is a game of chance, you win and own a fortune, you lose and are a pauper.

Mining has the same fascination as gambling.

The concentration of mind on money making takes thought from everything else and causes the first symptom of that malignant disease called "gold fever." It is a disease for which no antidote has yet been discovered. It makes men selfish and dishonest, and is fatal to the more common, conservative and legitimate methods of accumulating wealth.

Before starting on my trip I had frequently seen in the window of a well-known business man of a western city the advertisement of shares for sale in a wonderful mine owned by him. I was sufficiently interested to note its location, and when I arrived on the spot was told that he had no title to the ground, there being several outstanding claims that must be bought off first. On my return I mentioned to him what I had learned. He at first insisted that he did own it, but on discovering that I knew whereof I spoke, he acknowledged the truth, but asked me to

keep it quiet till he had obtained a title, as it might hurt the sale of the shares.

Now, this man is in all other respects strictly honest, a good Christian gentleman and church member. But he is, consciously or not, trying to "do" his friends and the public. Such an act can only be accounted for on the ground that he is afflicted with a bad case of gold fever.

The only members of Alaskan society that are immunes from this disease are the canine part of the population.

During my stay in Dawson I had many opportunities of observing these very important and interesting characters.

When a buckboard automobile, and dog team appeared simultaneously on the street there was something new to interest the "cheechaca."

In summer the dogs are having their vacation, their chief employment being to howl; but in the snowy season they take the place of horses and draw sledges over many miles of frozen country.

In the earlier days the dogs of the Klondike were much more important than now, commanding the price of a horse.

The "husky" and the "malamute" are the native breeds. The husky, with his short pointed ears, bushy tail, shaggy coat and wolf-like face, is the picture of intelligence. He is a character study in animal life, his very intelligence making him all

the more dangerous, when his interests or needs bring him in opposition to man.

He is tricky, displaying remarkable ingenuity in discovering and getting at food. He is always ravenous, being kept in a half-starved condition continuously, and things to eat must be hidden with the greatest care to ensure their safety from detection by his ever-watchful nose and eye. His skill as a thief is very remarkable. He has developed the power of self-preservation to a wonderful degree.

The favorite dog food is dry fish and rice, but he also relishes horseflesh, or indeed, almost any thing that comes in his way. It is a singular fact that long years of short rations have made it impossible for his stomach to retain more than one meal a day.

When homeward bound from a long journey, his eagerness to reach home gives him a speed that is difficult to stop. No reins are used, the whip serving as guide as well as persuader.

If one of a bunch of huskies attacks any thing, all the others calmly watch the fight till the advantage is decidedly in their companions favor, then all jump in and help him complete the job.

For this reason, if attacked by one of a pack, it is best to kill the dog, even though he may be valuable, than let him get any advantage, for the latter event would bring the whole pack into active warfare. Besides the natives are many "outside dogs."

The Newfoundland, St. Bernard and the mongrel are more affectionate and tractable, and much more satisfactory in many ways than the natives.

The native comes rightly by his fighting propensities. As the dog of the Indian for many generations, he has been whipped unmercifully, kept on short rations, starved in fact, and has never known the least bit of kind treatment. His nature has become so perverted by this cruelty, that it is doubtful if any amount of kindness and affection could change it, even in several generations. His wolf nature, together with starvation and the brutality of his masters, have made him what he is — crafty, cunning, thieving, treacherous and useful only when in harness.

The native dog does not bark; he howls, and the young "outside" dog will howl in imitation, as though preferring that way of venting his feelings to barking. It is curious to watch these puppies imitate the howls of their elders, as children do older people.

Say "mush" to a dog and he understands that he is to "go on," or "move away." Such is his training in obedience that he does so immediately.

If a dog once gets the advantage over you, he may remember it later to your sorrow, and it is better to kill him at once than let him see you feel any fear.

Although the native dog is half wolf, the wolf is his chief enemy, and in a fight the latter generally comes off victorious.

CHAPTER X.

River travel on the Yukon is a mighty uncertain quantity as to time, and it was a week before the "Sarah" was prepared to take her departure for the sixteen-hundred-mile voyage to St. Michaels first, and then to Nome. I had become rather impatient at the delay, and was glad to find myself afloat again, where without effort I could enjoy the ever-changing magnificence of the panorama on either hand.

The passenger list again numbered seventy.

Our first landing was at Forty-Mile, where there is a station of the Canadian mounted police.

One hears a great deal about the wonderful efficiency of the work of these officers. They are one of Canada's great successes, and are a most powerful factor in keeping law and order in the western parts of the Dominion.

When called upon to act they do so with a fearlessness that has cowed many an outlaw, and their cool judgment in cases of emergency has won them such respect that even the Indians on the warpath do not dare disobey them.

They have the powers of both police and magistrate, and often make the arrest and administer justice on the same day.

Their costume is most striking, consisting of a tight-fitting, red, military coat, a broad, stiff-brimmed, white felt hat, with safety strap behind the ears, a la cowboy, and riding boots, although I never saw one anywhere in the saddle. They always wear a most serious expression, as though they felt the great responsibility of their office.

The men are selected with reference to their ability and mental balance, as well as personal bravery. From what I saw and heard of them, the United States would do well to use some of our soldiers in the same manner.

Forty-Mile was a mining camp before the Klondike was discovered. Some claim it was the original mining camp in the Yukon territory.

Just after leaving Forty-Mile, we came upon a curious freak of Nature, called the "Old Man and Woman." These personages are rocks about one hundred feet apart on either bank and directly opposite each other, with the swift-flowing Yukon between. One is concave and the other correspondingly convex. The strata of the rock and colors match exactly, showing undoubtedly that they once were one — united in the bonds of matrimony, but that some terrible trouble, caused perhaps by an interfering earthquake, came between them, resulting in a separation forever.

At midnight we landed at Eagle on the Canadian

and Alaskan boundry. Here is the custom house and the United States post, Fort Egbert.

We were kept here till six the next morning by the custom house officers examining freight and baggage.

As we sailed away in the early morning we were again in Uncle Sam's territory.

The crisp air and beauty of the scenery so fascinated me that, after retiring at two A. M., I again found myself on deck at four, unable to sleep longer.

A "Yukoner" had told me that the boat's whistle was the signal for swarms of mosquitos and gnats to come down and greet the passengers at the landing; but, although I had come prepared with a most voluminous net for the protection of my head, it seemed to be an off season for these blood-thirsty pests, and we were most mercifully spared their attentions all the way to Nome. Several attempts, however, to explore the woods back of the landings stirred up such a swarm that we beat a hasty retreat to our vessel.

The boat's whistle did attract other hungry creatures — the dogs. It was amusing to see them plant themselves on the exact spot where experience or reason made them know they should be opposite the kitchen windows when the boat had finally landed. They seldom made a mistake in their calculations.

Just below Eagle we passed Calico Rock, the

greatest curiosity on the Yukon River. It stood alone, turning toward us a flat, perpendicular face, rising from the water's edge. This flat surface looked as though especially prepared by some lapidary to show to the traveler the beautiful arrangement of its strata and colors.

Nation was the next landing, or "station," as they are called on the Yukon. Here were three or four log houses, and, confined in a corral, one hundred dogs, used in the winter for carrying the mail up and down the frozen waterways.

At four in the afternoon we made a short stop at Circle, which some claim to be the spot where the original discovery of gold in Alaska was made.

When the miners there and at Eagle heard of the Klondike discovery, they fairly dropped their picks and shovels while in the air, as it were, and hastened off to join the stampede to Dawson.

Traveling on the Yukon is rather slow work. From Dawson to the mouth, there is a fall of only a foot a mile. The current is about five miles an hour, and our "Sarah" only made about fifteen miles in the same time. We had ample time to thoroughly study and enjoy every feature of this wonderful trip, so different from every previous experience that I seemed to be in a foreign land. How wonderfully clear everything was, and how distinct the outline of mountain, cliff and forest.

Even at midnight when we made a stop at Fort Yukon, the passengers went ashore in the lingering daylight and gathered flowers to send home in letters to their friends.

If we had been here a month earlier we might have seen the midnight sun.

We posted our letters at the Fort Yukon post-office. This place is six miles north of the Arctic Circle, and we wished to correct in the minds of our friends the "geography idea" of the "Frigid Zone being a place of mosses, lichens and stunted trees." When I saw this northern tundra it was "blossoming like the rose."

Indeed, its flora was of great beauty and abundance. The flowery fields were like gorgeous bouquets.

Innumerable varieties bloom together in one mass. A botanist of our party counted thirty-two varieties in a radius of a hundred feet. The most abundant and showy flower is the fire-weed, which has a more purple tint than at home. It covers the earth with a mass of color most attractive to the eye.

We saw it growing all along the river, where fires had cleared off other vegetation. It takes immediate possession after the fires have swept the ground clear, and some say it grows there because it has no opposition and is too cowardly to fight for its existence where there is competition. The reason for its wide distribution is that it produces seeds

innumerable, each furnished with a parachute of long silken threads, which carry it on the wings of the wind far and wide. So it gets there first and takes possession.

I may say here that our letters were one month in reaching home from Fort Yukon.

When we left Circle, our "Sarah" had been given in charge of a special Indian pilot. One is always engaged to steer between Circle and Fort Yukon, a distance of eighty miles, where the Yukon Flats make the channel most treacherous. The Indian seems to have an unerring instinct which tells him where the dangerous places are and helps him avoid them.

We had taken on green cord wood below Circle, and our progress as long as it lasted was at a funeral pace.

On July the twenty-sixth we awoke to find our boat tied up at Tananah, a small town at the mouth of a creek of the same name. Its only importance is that here is the supply point for Fairbanks, the newest mining camp in Alaska, situated two hundred and twenty-five miles up the creek.

The excitement was still "on," and I should have liked to made the place a visit. General Greely left us here for that purpose, but time not permitting me to do so, I contented myself with gathering accounts of it from the "temporary natives" of Tananah.

It seems that the first rush to Fairbanks was the

result of an unadulterated "fake." A man named Burnett and his partner went there with a stock of merchandise, expecting to trade with the Indians for furs. Indians were scarce, furs scarce, and the outlook for disposing of their goods hopeless. Something must be done to get them out of this hole; so putting their heads together and taking a Japanese gentleman into their confidence, they concocted a plan to save themselves from ruin by ruining others.

The Japanese appeared in Dawson with a bag of gold dust. He related to several persons his great discovery in Fairbanks, in strict confidence, of course.

Rumor, that greatest of all liars, did the rest. The wily Jap disappeared, dust and all, and was never heard of after. The news he left behind him spread like wild fire, and shortly a thousand people "stampeded" to Fairbanks.

They soon discovered the trickery, of course, and it was well for the Jap that he had placed miles between himself and their clutches. Suspicion fell on Burnett after a time, and the place became too warm for him, so he disappeared, not returning for a year.

With nothing else to do the men began to dig, and to such good purpose that gold was discovered in reality. This brought on another stampede, and today Fairbanks is called the largest log cabin town in the world. The population is variously estimated

at from four to ten thousand. Men who had been there, however, told me they doubted if the gold was there in sufficient quantity to justify the large population. However this may be, I saw three men stagger up our stairway under the weight of several boxes containing eighty-five thousand dollars' worth of gold dust, which they had just brought down from Fairbanks on the steamer "Rock Island." They stowed these boxes in their cabin, and by so doing saved the expense of freight and insurance, a sum of $2,762.50 — one-quarter per cent for freight and three per cent for insurance from Nome to Seattle. They ran risks, however, as every man, woman and child on board knew of the gold. Cases of robbery by boring up through the floor and box, thus letting the dust run out, have been known. Later when our steamer from Nome to Seattle ran aground on a sand bar off Nunivok Island, and was in danger of being dashed to pieces, if a wind had sprung up during the two hours before she was released, they, no doubt, regretted that it had not been expressed and insured.

Several daring highway robberies — a new feature in Alaska — have occurred near Fairbanks lately. Evidently civilization is advancing into the territory with our law courts, etc. However, the old spirit of self-protection has not entirely died out, for I heard several men say if these "holdups" were caught it would be a "cinch" that in a few hours nothing would be left of them but "relics."

We lay at Tananah twenty-four hours, while the "Sarah" unloaded railroad ties billed for the vicinity of Fairbanks. They were to be used in a railroad being built southward to meet one in construction from Seward, near Valdez, northward. Four thousand men were working on this road during the summer, and in a distance of three hundred and fifty miles as many iron bridges had been constructed. The expense must be very heavy, but it will certainly pay, as back of Valdez are located some quartz mines, containing a variety of minerals, including gold, iron, copper and coal, for which transportation to the port, Seward City, is thus provided.

Adjoining Tananah is Fort Gibbon, another United States post, where there is a telegraph office and wireless station. I was present when a gentleman sent a ten-word message to Nome, for which the price was one dollar and forty cents. In exchange for two dollar bill he received fifty cents, the operator telling him that quarters were the smallest coins in circulation. Imagine a number of telegrams sent with short change, as in this case, and possibly the word "graft" will suggest itself.

"Graft" is a disease something akin to "gold fever." I heard a deputy U. S. marshal deploring the fact that the only graft in his position was "mileage allowed" and "mileage spent."

This deputy was an interesting man when he began relating his experiences.

He was once called upon to take charge of a lunatic going to Portland. His prisoner was a man of education and good family, who had lost his mind in his solitary life as a prospector. On the way he seemed to take a new interest in things around him, and when they neared their destination, and the poor fellow saw signs of civilization all about him, he became quiet and seemed changing for the better. On reaching Portland he suddenly asked, "How long have I been crazy?" His mind had been completely restored by his return to the familiar scenes of civilization.

The isolation from friends and familiar scenes drives many a poor prospector from melancholia to insanity, but strange to relate, there are among them but few suicides.

In the face of these stories, a "sour dough" present remarks, "Well, I'm never so happy as when alone in the mountains prospecting."

CHAPTER XI.

On board the "Sarah" were some very interesting characters. I was greatly pleased to find that I was to have for companions for the rest of my trip to Seattle three gentlemen whom I had found very "good fellows" while in Dawson. They were all bachelors and travelers like myself, and their society added much to the pleasure of the journey.

Mr. B. was a merchant from Texas, had traveled much at home and also abroad, and was not born yesterday. He meant to see much more of this world before called to the next. Mr. M. was his friend and companion, also from Texas, where he had been president of two railroads, and was then in the real estate business. He was well up in science and religion, and a stubborn opponent in an argument; a point had to be most thoroughly proved to convince him.

On the scientific side he was rather a bore. It is a useful thing to have a geologist and mineralogist with a party traveling in a mining country, but brother M. rode his hobby too hard at times, especially on the sentimental side. His reference to the "gigantic workings of Nature years and years ago, etc.," after a time did not interrupt the trend of one's thoughts — we got used to it.

He was a good man, used neither tobacco, alcohol or profanity, and was not in his first youth, either.

The third gentleman was a Mr. J., a typical New England yankee, from "twenty-nine miles west of Detroit," "had been raised on a farm and was sixty years old." He had laid aside three thousand dollars with which to see what he could of the United States in a year. He proposed to spend his well-earned rest in seeing his own country.

He was a Baptist when at home, had great confidence in his fellowmen, and was a thorough all-around optimist.

The two great events of his life were, first, when he was waylaid and robbed of nearly six hundred dollars, which was recovered and returned to him when the robber was caught, and, second, when he tried to take a fall out of a bull. The last he attempted to do by seizing the animal by the horns. He did not count on the superior strength of the bull, however, which took the "fall" out of him instead, and left him with several broken bones, fortunately sparing his life.

The above thrilling incidents he related with the becoming modesty of a hero.

He "dressed to suit no one but himself," and when an opportunity came for any side trip to see some place of interest, never let a ten dollar bill stand in his way.

He was as full of good traits as an egg is of meat, and thoroughly enjoyed everything he saw. If I happened on deck at any hour of the night, there would be the "Deacon," looking at the scenery. I asked him what excuse he had for being up at that hour losing good sleep. He replied, "I can get all the sleep I want down in Michigan, but this kind of scenery may never come my way again, so I'm making the most of it."

Another passenger of note was Dr. J., of Indiana, who was president of De Pauw University when Senator Beveridge was a student there. He was very proud of the boy, who, while at college, showed indications of his future success. One day the future Senator came to the Doctor begging to be excused from mathematics on the plea that he could make no headway and was discouraged. This request was granted. In all linguistic studies he excelled. In oratory he took first prize always, and as money was awarded as prizes, these sums helped him to work his way through college.

In one oratorical contest between the Jacksonville, Illinois, and De Pauw colleges, William Jennings Bryan represented the former and Beveridge the latter. The prize went to Beveridge. He has since learned enough about mathematics to count up good sized bills for his legal services.

Another gentleman who occupied the stateroom next to mine set us all guessing. There was an air

of reserve and mystery about him. He had been with us all the way from Dawson and had kept his identity from us in a most studied manner.

He was unusually well informed and never denied you the pleasure of his conversation, should you address him. He had traveled much and spoke in praise of his treatment by Russian officials, while in their country.

Major F. had joined us at Tananah and, wishing him to meet this mysterious person, I said, "Mr. — Mr. — Excuse me, but I can't think of your name, this is Major F."

"It makes no difference about my name," he replied, "the Major would soon forget it; but, Major, I am glad to meet you just the same." This relieved the momentary embarrassment, and we were soon laughing together over some good stories. Their discussion of the Russo-Japanese War was most interesting to me, as it was from a military man's standpoint.

Our curiosity was satisfied later, when during a discussion of the death of Secretary Hay, our nameless friend fished out a letter from among some papers in his suit case which proved to be a letter of introduction from the Secretary to foreign diplomats and United States consuls. It stated that the bearer was Captain B., an attorney from New York City. Thus the mystery was cleared. He got his title of "captain" in the Cuban War, where he went

bravely to the front — as far as Chattanooga — and after hostilities had ceased, received ăn honorable discharge.

The "Captain" was a rara avis, and often was the center of a group where interesting subjects were being discussed intelligently and well. We discovered that he also was a bachelor and sight-seeing his hobby. "Yes," he said, "I have tried traveling with companions, but it was never a success. I once took my mother and sister on a trip. Why, I lost more than half of my time waiting for them to get ready. I have come to believe in the little couplet which says,

> 'Down to Gehenna or up to the throne,
> He travels the fastest who travels alone.' "

He was characterized by short, sharp, quick and very decided opinions, a habit probably contracted in the army, and often emphasized them by a touch of profanity.

As he came from New York, people naturally asked his opinion of the Nan Patterson trial, then attracting attention.

"Not the slightest proof of her guilt. Everyone knows that pistols go off mysteriously sometimes without anyone touching them, and occasionally even when 'not loaded.'

"Attorney Jerome knows he can't convict her, but he also knows he has bad people to deal with,

and his whole object is to create a moral effect, in the hope of putting a stop to some of the wicked devices used by some women in New York for blackmailing men."

"Possibly you are right," said some one.

"Why, every one knows I am right," was his characteristic reply.

He pronounced Captain Slocum, whose voyage around the world alone, on his thirty-foot yacht, the "Spray," gave him great notoriety some few years ago, as the blank, blankedest, blank fool that ever lived. He took one chance in a thousand, and, as it happened, came through alive. How he did so Providence only can tell.

The "Deacon" seemed much impressed by this positive gentleman's learning. One day when Dr. J. and I were together, he approached and said, "That man B. knows the tonnage, gross and net, of every steamer on salt water, and has just informed me that the bottom of the sea has been so thoroughly surveyed that every mountain and valley are known as well as those on land. I believe he knows more than any two men on board." "Yes," answered Dr. J., "I am of the opinion that when he was made they threw the mold away."

I afterward told the "Deacon" that Dr. J. was a learned scholar himself, and he might have modified his remarks by saying "present company ex-

cepted." "Well," said he, "I might have said something else, but I meant just what I did say."

The "Captain" accompanied us as far as Nome. There the placer mines on the beach proved such an attraction that he could not tear himself away, and concluded to wait over for a later steamer, the "Victoria," which he said had the inducement of a good library. "I can devour two books a day when there is nothing else to do," said he, and that was the last we saw of him.

Another single gentleman who filled an important role in this combination of interesting characters was a Mr. B., of Buffalo. He was tall, with a portly figure, and so deliberate and dignified that we dubbed him the "Governor." He had attached himself to General Greely's party, and it was not till the General left us for the side trip to Fairbanks that he became democratic, and we got to know his interesting ways. In contrast to the "Captain," his wish seemed to be to have people know about him. He had an amusing habit, when introduced to a lady of informing her on the spot that he was a bachelor. When it was a gentleman who was presented to him he was made acquainted with the fact that the "Governor's" father had been the first president of the New York Central Railroad. After these confidences he seemed to feel that neither sex could misunderstand him. He had been brought up in the lap of luxury, and was now living on his inheritance,

both financial and social. As he promenaded the deck with chest out and thumbs in arm holes, he would step up to someone, swell up and in a deliberate, impressive tone say, "I-would-like-to-ask-you-a question." On being told you were at his service, he would say, "I-would-a-like-to-ask-you-a-the-time-of day."

On hearing several wild Yukon tales, he announced his intention of making a note of them to retail to his fellow-townsmen on his return. "For," said he, "I do not suppose anyone from western New York has ever been on the Yukon, so I can safely repeat these, and they will believe them."

CHAPTER XII.

At five in the morning on the twenty-eighth of July, our boat whistled for Nulato. The population was there to meet us. It consisted principally of Indians and their only visible means of livelihood was the fish hung out everywhere to dry, out of reach of the dogs.

To insure additional safety, these cunning thieves were all tied, and their continual howling was the only thing that gave life to the place.

One passenger went ashore to stretch his legs, but soon beat a hasty retreat when his nostrils met the terrible odor of the place — a combination of fish, dog and native.

We were not sorry to move on again.

As we proceeded, all the enthusiasm aroused by the fine scenery was necessary to create warmth. At times the chilliness overcame the enthusiasm and crept into our bones. Then a spell in the steam-heated cabin would be indulged in, to thaw out the frost. When the blood began flowing warm, everyone would be out again, loth to miss any of the passing wonders. The changing panorama of picturesque mountains, rising higher and higher, till their faint outlines, blending with the sky, seemed as if they were stepping stones to heaven. The air was

wonderfully clear, even at night no mists or fogs being visible. The night, however, was never dark, and what may seem strange, lit by no stars, even at midnight. But if invisible during the summer season, those who live here in winter have every opportunity to go star-gazing, for they are then visible most of the time.

At Koserufski we visited the Holy Cross Mission, and were shown the prize garden of Alaska. It is the result partly of favorable atmospheric conditions, but more of the skill and attention bestowed by the sisters of the mission.

Even in this far-off corner one sees signs of the world's great octopus — the Standard Oil Company. One of its many arms is on the Yukon, and at Andreofski our eyes were greeted by a mammoth oil tank, which supplies fuel to steamers plying on the river.

Opposite Andreofski, and sheltered by an island, was a fleet of seven idle vessels fast going to ruin. They were formerly in use when the Klondike rush was on. The machinery was worn and rusty, still it seemed strange to thus abandon valuable property. Possibly the long journey to Seattle, where they might have been sold was more than the owners could afford.

The Northern Commercial Company seems, to have a monopoly of the Alaskan trade at present,

but one hears various opinions as to whether it is making money or not.

The stock is owned by San Francisco Jews, and it has a line of large steamers running to Nome, and stores of large capacity in different parts of Alaska.

A remnant of the Russian influence is still seen in their missions. We passed them here and there. A red Greek church, with dwellings clustered around it, was seen shortly after leaving Andreofski. For some reason, our boat failed to stop, although the schedule stated there was a postoffice there, and our boat was supposed to call for the mail.

The "Deacon" became much excited about what he considered "neglect of duty," made a note of it and announced his intention of reporting the matter to the Postoffice Department through the Congressman from his district.

After a week's sail down this noble river, we at last found ourselves nearing its great delta. According to our guide book the water reaches Behring Sea through forty mouths. Here the mountains had disappeared and flats were around us.

Before entering the "forty mouths" we were obliged to tie up for two hours to await the incoming tide.

At seven the next morning, when I rolled off the shelf of my stateroom, we were almost through that particular one of the "forty mouths" which led to

the sea, without having experienced any unusual thrill or excitement. No one had tried to count the mouths, we simply took the guide book's word for the number. As we neared the outlet, the distance between banks widened to probably five or ten miles.

The great river brings down so much silt that the muddy effect is easily perceptible ten miles out from shore, where the water continues quite shallow. Sandbars form as far south as Nunivok Island, and only a flat-bottomed boat can be used near the shore. These bars are quite a menace to vessels, which often run aground on them.

Our "Sarah" had more of the tortoise than the hare about her, and was rather a trial to our band of typical Americans. Someone was always asking, "When shall we reach Nulato?" or "How long before our next stop?" till a quiet gentleman felt moved to remark, "If Americans were traveling on a streak of lightning, someone would want to whip up.'

CHAPTER XIII.

At ten in the morning we anchored a mile from the shore of St. Michaels, which is one hundred and six miles beyond the mouth of the Yukon. Here we were to change to the steamer bound for Nome. St. Michaels is an island, to which we were conveyed by a tug, the extreme shallowness of the water preventing a nearer approach of our vessel. On the island is a United States military post and wireless telegraph station. The usual Indian village and Greek church were in evidence, and an old Russian block house attracted our interest. It contained seven small cannons, probably a remnant of the former Russian occupation. It is circular in shape, built of logs and is eighteen feet in height and ten in diameter. Although so small, it was probably a good protection against the Indians one hundred years ago.

It was here that I first saw that peculiar Eskimo garment called the "parka," and the canoe, called the "kyak."

The former is a simple garment, made to slip over the head, and resembles in cut the smock frock of the English laborer. It is made either of fur, skin or the entrails of the seal. The last-named

material, being thin, is used for summer dresses, which are light and at the same time water-proof.

Each parka has a hood made to draw over the head, when needed for warmth or protection from rain.

The parka, however interesting, we were content to examine at a distance, and no one asked an Eskimo to sell his as a souvenir; their dirty appearance made us feel certain that each parka clothed more than the Eskimo.

The kyak, called also the Eskimo skin-boat, is made of skins sewed together and stretched over a frame, leaving only a small circular hole in the center, into which the Eskimo climbs and sits on the bottom, his head and arms only being outside. These boats are so light that they are as unsteady as egg shells. No one but an Eskimo could keep one in equilibrium, especially in rough weather.

This faculty for keeping his balance must have been developed by long generations of training, and belongs to these people singly or en masse, for occasionally the kyak is made to carry several persons packed in under the covering of skin, while one sits up and paddles. So perfect a balance is kept by all that no upsets are ever known. How the passengers breathe is a mystery, for the man at the paddle fills up the only opening there is.

After two hours spent at St. Michaels, we were towed out to the steamer "Corwin," which had

L OF C.

meanwhile arrived. The water was rough, and we climbed up her rope companion-way in fear and trembling, thankful when the solid boards of the deck were beneath our feet.

A delay in starting was caused by a man who rowed out from shore to see if his wife was aboard.

It seems that the couple had been living at Fairbanks. He beat her, was arrested and fined for it. She was supposed to be running away from him.

We all wondered what he would have done had he found her on our boat. It was well he did not, for every man and boy from the captain down was ready to take a hand in throwing him overboard had he attempted any abuse in case she were among us. On the dock at Nome a few days later I saw him again, scrutinizing the face of every woman he met, in his search for his wife. The wife, whoever she was, had my sympathy, and I hope she escaped, although I heard nothing of him after.

After a week on the "Sarah," the change of cooking was welcome. Our kitchen brigade was composed entirely of Chinamen.

The "Corwin" was a staunch little vessel, and had once been a cruiser. Captain West, who commanded her, was an able seaman, a handsome man, and, if such a thing were possible, seemed to be burdened with good health. Eskimos were doing service as roustebouts, but were provokingly slow in their movements, especially at the fire drills.

These drills occurred every afternoon, and kept the possibility of a fire constantly in our minds, and made us feel thankful that we were experiencing only an imaginary fire.

After passing a high promontory called Cape Darby we entered Golvin Bay and anchored in deep water a mile out from the shore of Government Mission, where a herd of two thousand reindeer is located.

A small boat took the mail ashore, but the distance was too great for us to distinguish the deer. I regretted missing an opportunity of seeing these animals, which bid fair to be as useful here as in their native land.

The caribou, or American reindeer, is only found in the wild state, and has been almost exterminated by hunters. The Government is now encouraging the breeding of the domestic variety of Eurasia, and for this purpose has imported herds of them with their keepers, into various parts of Alaska. The natives are thus taught to care for the animals properly, and then the Government lends a herd to any native known to be trustworthy for a certain length of time. At the end of this period the original herd is returned to the Government, the native keeping the increase.

The experiment of turning loose a herd on one of the small Alaskan islands has proved a success, and it is proposed eventually to stock all of the islands

thus, so that in case of a shipwreck they may prove the means of saving the lives of any who may by cast away on these shores.

The reindeer travels from fifty to one hundred miles a day, and hustles for his own food, which is a kind of lichen called "reindeer moss." As a beast of burden he is a great improvement on the dog, the food for which must be provided by his master.

At present there are eight thousand reindeer in Alaska, one-half of which belong to the natives, and the other half to the Government.

They multiply rapidly, and an enthusiast has estimated that under certain conditions Alaska could be so thoroughly stocked with them that the whole United States could be supplied with reindeer hams and smoked tongues from them.

To the butcher the reindeer is worth fifty dollars, and as a sledge animal his value is one hundred and fifty dollars.

It was almost noon when the "Corwin" dropped anchor two miles out from the coast of Nome, and we were tugged ashore. The town, like others in Alaska, has a transient population, at present approximating three thousand.

It rambles along the beach for five miles, only two of which are of solid construction. The buildings are of frame. It is built on a narrow strip between the gold-bearing sand of the shore, and the marsh of the tundra, stretching back of it for miles

into the interior. The town has progressed so far in the establishment of law and order that dance houses are no longer allowed, and gambling is restricted. The atmosphere of the place is quiet and orderly.

Originally the entire beach was a placer mine from end to end; not a shovelfull of its sand was without its proportion of gold dust. Mining has been done successfully in water close to shore. On the beach now, and within the city limits, there are three mines being operated; two of them with steam shovels, the third by hand.

The Sand Spit near Nome is a favorite place for the Siberian Eskimos to pitch their tents, when the summer season brings them across with the souvenirs, which they hope to sell to tourists. Here we saw the seal skin hanging out to dry. In the crude state it is grey with black spots, but after being sent to London, dyed and returned to us it is quite a different fur.

Dried fish and walrus hides filled with water are a part of the Eskimo's provision against hunger and thirst.

The Siberian Eskimo is a good barometer. He has an infallible instinct for judging atmospheric changes, and as a weather prophet his predictions are most reliable. When he is late in coming over in the spring it is sure that summer will be a tardy arrival.

He does not take any chances on stormy weather when he starts on a journey of several hundred miles in his frail canoe.

I met by letter of introduction, Mr. W. S., who has been in Nome for seven years. He has had his share of prosperity, but was in possession of so many claims that keeping them good required a large yearly outlay.

In this "good dirt" he sees wonderful possibilities for future wealth. But the realization of these hopes may keep him in Nome for many years to come.

I learned much from Mr. S., and when I said good-night, it was with the understanding that he would join us in the morning for a trip to the end of the Nome and Arctic Narrow Gauge Railroad.

Mr. S. lives in bachelor quarters and can't be beat as a housekeeper.

Our party of six started at seven the next morning for the trip mentioned above. We went through Anvil Creek and Nome Valley, a distance of fourteen miles.

The mine, with the most interesting and romantic history, is known as "Brown's Discovery," on Little Creek about one mile from Nome, and just below Moonlight Springs, from which the city gets its supply of drinking water.

There are several versions of the troubles of this mine. It was discovered in 1904. After digging

down a considerable depth the three men working it became discouraged. Two wished to quit, but the third wished to try it "just one more day."

The first pan on that day produced fifty cents, the next three an increase, and the fifth yielded eighteen hundred dollars. It was a great find, for in ninety days eight hundred thousand dollars was taken out.

Then came claimants showing prior claims. Brown, dreading litigation, bought them off at the rate of ten to twenty thousand dollars each, and thought his troubles over, but later the Pioneer Mining Company brought suit. The case is now in the courts, and it is the general opinion there that the company has a good case, and "Brown is up against it." Other rich mines in this vicinity are in litigation, and it is probably part of the great swindle, hiding under the wing of the law, that Rex Beach so ably describes in a recent number of McClure's Magazine.

Another case in the courts which has some interesting developments is the Midus Case. Two men salted some mines and on false representations realized many thousands of dollars.

Then the older man was missing and the younger is now in jail awaiting trial. There is difficulty finding a law to fit the case, and it is possible that "obtaining money on false pretenses" is

the strongest charge that can be made against him, although many suspect him of his partner's murder.

Fortune is many times within the grasp of a gold seeker, and he loses it by not holding on long enough. The case of a young physician who was known to me was one of these. He went to Nome in 1900, took a claim and dug down eight feet without reaching pay dirt. He had left a young wife and child at home and thoughts of these outweighed his love of gold. He became discouraged and homesick, abandoned his claim and left for the "outside." Shortly after another man jumped into the eight-foot hole, made it ten feet deeper and took out thirty-eight thousand dollars.

The railroad by which we reached these places was a primitive affair, and the track the crookedest I ever saw.

Being laid on the soft mud of the tundra, it has no solid foundation, and the rails bend in all directions. When a car gets off the track there is no time wasted. All hands reach for jack screw, frogs and crowbar, and you are soon going forward again, ready for another accident.

The passenger coach was open on all sides, but with a canopy, the purpose of which I could not discover. The seats were arranged in the mutual-admiration style, and you could gaze at your opposite neighbor if she or he pleased you better than the scenery.

The ride took us through Anvil Creek, Little Creek, Portland Bench, Dexter Creek and the Nome River Valley. The last afforded a most beautiful and grand view, with the Saw-Tooth Mountains, a spur of the Rockies, in the distance.

If any of my readers would like to try his luck at Nome, Mr. S. will furnish a claim for him to work, and allow him fifty per cent of all the gold he unearths, making no charge whatever for the digging if he is not successful.

Owners of mines are anxious to sell outright, but capital is timid, and while waiting for purchasers they must pay one hundred dollars per annum for work on each claim to keep it good. Otherwise it would be sacrificed to the ever-watchful claim jumpers.

Claims may be bought as low as one hundred dollars each. You take a chance when you buy, but you have as good an opportunity as the next man, and may make a fortune for the small amount you risk.

Mine owners are often land poor. There are twenty thousand claims staked out in the Nome district and only five hundred are being worked.

The naming of Nome was an accident. A party of surveyors were putting stakes in the ground where names were wanted. The one at Nome was marked "Name," which meant "Give it a name." The "a" in "Name" became blurred and looked like

an "o," hence that was thought to be the name intended, and so remained.

The water on the coast of Nome is too shallow to admit of any kind of steamer landing. Every passenger and all freight must be loaded on lighters, pulled to shore, a distance of two miles, by tugs, and then unloaded on the shore.

The Government has made an appropriation for a deep-water harbor, and work is already begun.

An Alaskan newspaper stated that a company was being organized to tunnel under Behring Strait for a railroad to Siberia — rather a wild statement I should say, as it was estimated that the cost would be a quarter of a billion, and would take five years to complete. Dividends are too far off and uncertain to recommend a project like the above to business men, so probably the report emanated from some "Yukoner," who likes to speculate in billions, in his mind.

There is not a stick of timber within hundreds of miles of Nome. All lumber is shipped from Seattle.

President Roosevelt's popularity exists all through Alaska, and the people wish he would visit their land and give it a boom. This will never be while he is in office, as he cannot reach there without going out of the United States, a thing forbidden to our President by an unwritten law.

Nome is over five thousand eight hundred miles from Cincinnati, and has standard time five hours slower.

The winter winds there are fiercely cold and cutting, the thermometer often dropping to sixty or even seventy degrees below.

The same temperature prevails at Dawson, but the air there is so dry that winter weather is much more enjoyable, although only two or three hours of daylight each day break the long winter night.

CHAPTER XIV.

My journey homeward began on August second. One hundred and forty-six passengers embarked at Nome for Seattle on the steamer "Senator," trusting their lives to Captain Lloyd, a hardy old Norwegian, whose seventy-eight years did not seem to have diminished his usefulness.

I had heard of the proverbial roughness of Behring Sea, and the dangers off Cape Flattery when entering the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and felt some misgivings concerning the voyage before me. With the exception of one day when there was a heavy swell, and a second during which it was so rough as to necessitate racks on the dining table, the trip was smooth and pleasant. One passenger had made the voyage eleven times, and said this was the smoothest of them all.

The roughest bit of sea was the two miles we experienced while in the lighter going from the dock at Nome to our vessel anchored in deep water. The lighter was loaded with trunks, suit cases and luggage of all kinds, some dogs and a variety of people. There was considerable risk attending our embarkation, as the lighter was never still a moment. On the way out we floated gayly on the waves, which were rough, and before the two miles

were covered several became seasick. I was, fortunately, not of the number, and enjoyed the novel experience to the utmost, missing none of the interesting details. On reaching the ship it was surprising that the transfer was made with only one accident. How the people managed to get aboard from the rough rocking lighter was a wonder to me. It was a difficult feat to clamber up the companion-way with only a rope balustrade to steady one. Even the man with the crushed foot and two old ladies, so feeble and sick that stalwart arms performed the difficult task of getting them on board, were landed on deck in safety. Then the rebellious dogs, showing every sign of fear at the unsteady footing, were lifted bodily, and all of us were about to give a sigh of relief that the embarkation had been accomplished without accident, when suddenly a splash and shout attracted the attention of some and we realized that one of our number had fallen into the water. As he came to the surface many hands seized him and pulled him aboard. It was noticed that he still held his cigarette in his mouth, and when he stood dripping, but safe, on the deck he remarked that he didn't mind the wetting so much as he did having his cigarette put out.

On the second day out we had the only adventure of our homeward voyage. As sometimes happens, we encountered a fog and ran aground on a sand bar not far from Nunivok Island. Our imprison-

ment might have lasted for days and have been very dangerous in the event of a strong wind springing up, in which case we stood the chance of having the vessel put out of commission and ourselves into eternity. But the elements favored us and we were off in two hours, thanking Providence for the happy escape from a watery grave with none to tell the tale. After it was all over, and our vessel well on her way again, people began to tell each other of their fears while on the bar, but during the two hours of suspense no one betrayed any signs of distress.

During the voyage much time was given to story-telling and many games of poker whiled away the hours for the many gamblers aboard. Games of chance formed the chief topic of conversation in the smoking room, where each man discoursed about his particular system for beating at faro, that most fascinating of all games to the regular gambler.

There was one "wise guy" in the crowd, who claimed that he had the only "sure" system of winning. He said, "First, take a good sleep at home, then go to the gambling room; take a little drink of their wine, eat sparingly of their free lunch, rest a minute on the lounge and—then go home."

On passing through Unimack Pass we left Behring Sea and entered the great Pacific. There was considerable fog when we made this change of waters, but enough could be seen of the snow-capped

mountains to show that they were volcanoes, dead or sleeping.

The one rough day was an experience I would not have missed for a good deal. I did not realize the roughness till I went to the breakfast table and saw the nice little contrivances for keeping your meal together. The racks were screwed to the table and kept the dishes from sliding over the edge.

My first thought was that it would be a good day to diet, but on second thought I recalled that I was out for new experiences, and here was a chance for one. I reached my seat without attracting any especial attention, I believe, though not quite sure about it.

The waiter said something. "Yes," I replied, and he brought a cereal and condensed milk. I reached for the can and it moved six inches from me. The table and chairs were screwed fast to the floor, and I knew I could hold on to them if need be, and I soon found that in the sort of moving picture affair before me the thing to do when you wanted to secure an article was to stab a few inches ahead, in the path where it was sliding. I soon got used to the horrible motion of the ship, and enjoyed a good meal.

When leaving my seat I took sight at the exit, and in three steps had my hand on the newell post at the foot of the stairs. On reaching the open air I shook hands with myself, for I felt all right.

Large whales, numerous in these waters, were a common sight, but we failed to get a glimpse of the whale's great enemy and destroyer, the thrasher. The latter is a great shark, thirty feet long, whose chief weapon is a sharp sword-like appendage projecting from his back. The two animals have terrific battles, but when the thrasher swims under the whale and rips him open with his terrible sword, it is all over so far as the whale is concerned. His blood colors the water for many feet around the scene of the struggle.

On the evening of the seventh day we sighted land at a point on Vancouver Island, and several hours later the light on Cape Flattery came into view. Rockets were fired as a signal that our steamer was approaching, and the news was immediately telegraphed to Seattle. At the sight of land a spirit of gayety pervaded the entire ship, for our voyage had been a long one and not too comfortable. It was not till the next morning, however, that we reached Seattle, a voyage of just eight days to the hour.

At noon I was speeding homeward as fast as the Canadian Pacific could carry me, through the wonderful scenery of the Canadian Rockies, with stupendous mountains towering far above the timber line; then through great fields of waving grain almost ready for the harvest. A feeling came over

me that I had been out of the world, as it were, and was returning to civilization.

Soon great cities were reached, and then my own, seeming all the more smoky, hot and dirty after the clear, pure air my lungs had been drinking in for so many days.

One soon again gets into the clutches of civilization and settles down into the monotony of everyday life, as if he had never left it. My trip soon seemed like a wonderful journey to fairyland which one takes often in a dream and awakes with only a remembrance of its marvels.

But this remembrance is one of my most precious possessions, of which nothing can rob me as long as memory lasts.

I have visited all the great sights of my native land, but without hesitation I must pronounce this the "greatest trip of my life." A popular saying is, "See Rome and die," but I say, "See Alaska and live."

AUG 11 1906

A TRIP TO ALASKA AND THE KLONDIKE IN THE SUMMER OF 1905

By N. E. KEELER

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